Understanding the Desistance of Formerly Violent Offenders:

An Adult Learning Perspective

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Abstract

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Scholars and policymakers alike have recognized mass incarceration and criminal recidivism as two of the most profound challenges American society faces. For more than half a century, the United States has been the world's most prominent incarcerator, boasting the highest incarceration rate and the third-highest recidivism rate, with analysts projecting that U.S. incarceration will grow exponentially in the near future. The U.S. has more instances of lethal crime than any of its developed peers. Violent crime makes up a more significant percentage of criminal activity than property, drug, and public order crimes combined. Thus, individual states' social, judicial, and policing policies have a greater impact on U.S. incarceration rates than the actions or challenges faced by any of its federal entities. Both localized and national efforts to reduce incarceration and re-offense rates through literacy initiatives, education pipelines, harsher sentencing, and the development of reentry programs have rendered statistically insignificant results. Despite the resources afforded by the nation's wealth; decades of scholarship and activism dedicated to exposing its inherent racial inequities; and its proven inability to act as a catalyst to social reform; the American carceral system remains a threat to the social welfare and economic health of the United States.

This qualitative study provides an adult learning perspective on the process by which a sample of previously violent offenders arrived at criminal desistance despite a statistical

likelihood of re-offense. The participants consisted of thirty individuals (males, ages 22 to 49) previously convicted of and self-identifying as having committed violent felonies in New York State after being previously incarcerated for other violent crimes. This research's primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews. Supportive methods included a pre-interview survey and interview participants' use of an illustrative timeline tool as an interview discussion aid.

This research made application of transformative learning and self-efficacy theories as a lens through which to examine four main points of inquiry as they occurred within participants' recollection of their learning and desistance process: what experiences were fundamental; the role of self-perception and self-assessment; supports and hindrances to desistance; and supported recommendations for education design.

Analysis of the findings revealed an emergent and substantiated four-phase process of desistance: success separate from desistance as leading to new identity; new identity as a catalyst to reappraisal and revision of needs and perspectives; excavation and re-evaluation of formative experiences; and conscious navigation of somatic responses.

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CHAPTER I: PROBLEM AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Overview of the Research

This qualitative study examined the experiences of 30 individuals formerly incarcerated for violent offenses in New York State and offers insight into how these individuals' transformative learning resulted in their desistance from criminal activity. The considerations and approaches of this study differ from canonical studies on the subject of desistance (Laub & Sampson, 2001) by its focus on the role of adult learning and utilization of transformative learning theory (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 1991, 1994, 2000; Nerstrom, 2014). The lenses provided by these theories served as a means of gaining insight into formerly violent offenders' learning experiences.

Previous research on the experiences of individuals involved in incarceration cycles and carceral circuitry (Berger et al., 2017; Farrall, 2005; Kazemian, 2007; Laub et al., 1998; Laub & Sampson, 2001; LeBel et al., 2008; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011; Wright & Wright, 1992) has primarily examined three main concepts:

- how the prisoner reentry industry fails to rehabilitate (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019);
- the impact incarceration has on society (Browning et al., 2003; Clear, 2003; Garland, 2001; Mauer, 2002, 2003; Miller, 2003; Roberts, 2004; Rose & Clear, 1998; Simon, 2007; Wildeman, 2009); and
- why offenders choose to offend or re-offend (Laub & Sampson, 2001).

Although the topic of desistance from criminality is by no means a new one, researchers repeatedly conclude that the frameworks and concepts of the fields in which desistance traditionally lives are ill-equipped to provide a cohesive explanation of the process by which it occurs (Berger et al., 2017; Kazemian, 2007; Laub et al., 1998; LeBel et al., 2008; Pyrooz &

Decker, 2011; Wright & Wright, 1992). Contemporary researchers examining the topic of desistance have attempted to address this gap in understanding by applying transformative theory (Berger et al., 2017; Decker et al., 2014; Giordano et al., 2003) and citing the need for further exploration in the application of an adult learning lens to the topic of desistance.

In aggregating toward a comprehensive understanding of the manners in which learning experiences act as barriers or catalysts toward desistance, this research provides insight into the process of learning experienced by individuals who have desisted from criminal violence. The goal in the undertaking of this study was to offer insight into the experiences of formerly violent offenders and to answer questions regarding the cognitive and emotional processes by which desistance occurs (Berger et al., 2017; Kazemian, 2007; Laub et al., 1998; LeBel et al., 2008; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011; Wright & Wright, 1992).

Presented in this chapter is an overview of the background and context that frames this study, followed by the research problem, research purpose, and research questions. This chapter also includes the research approach, the researcher's perspectives, and the researcher's assumptions. Chapter one concludes with a discussion of the rationale for this research study and definitions of its key terminology.

Background and Context

The United States incarcerates a larger share of its population than any other country in the world. American incarceration and recidivism are problems that community organizations, universities, and large governance have spent decades seeking to address. Despite local and national efforts to reduce incarceration and high re-offense rates through a plethora of literacy initiatives, education pipelines, and reentry programs, progress has been statistically

insignificant. The United States currently boasts more than 2.4 million residents within its penitentiaries, correctional facilities, and local jails (Wagner & Walsh, 2016).

Comparing U. S. incarceration rates to those seen in other countries can help provide some perspective on just how large a problem the U. S. carceral system has become. Within the United States, there are 36 states with higher incarceration rates than Cuba, the country with the world's second-highest incarceration rate. A comparison of U.S. incarceration rates with some of the world's most fragile states provides further evidence of the U. S. incarceration problem (Fund for Peace, 2017).

Ohio's citizenry of 11.6 million residents has a state-prison population of 77,000. This prison population is comparable with Pakistan's prison population of 75,000, a considerably smaller percentage of its approximately 192 million citizens. The contrast between Maryland's 67,000 state prison population in a citizenry of 8.3 million compared to Egypt's 68,000 prisoners in its citizenry of 85.3 million further drives the point (Wagner & Walsh, 2016).

The state of New York has a pattern of incarceration that is particularly alarming. New York has an incarceration rate of 443 per 100,000 people (Wagner & Sawyer, 2018). This incarceration rate is significantly higher than several third-world countries, such as Haiti which incarcerates 96 people per 100,000, Libya which incarcerates 99 people per 100,000 and the Dominican Republic which incarcerates 244 per 100,000 individuals (Fund for Peace, 2020). The Prison Policy Initiatives' 2019 report noted that New York State's rate of imprisonment has grown dramatically over the last 40 years, and people of color continue to be overrepresented in New York Jails and Prisons (as cited in Sawyer & Wagner, 2020).

The Fund for Peace recognizes each country within the top ten percent of global incarcerators as having been impacted by recent and sustained social trauma with an exception

given only to the United States (Fund for Peace, 2020). This trend begs whether there is a tear in our civic order's social psyche that, unaddressed, impacts the United States in manners that are detrimental to its citizenry's social health and welfare.

A 15-state study completed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (n.d.) found that nearly two-thirds of individuals are rearrested within three years of release from U. S. state prisons. Further, results indicated that 76.6% of those released fell to recidivism within five years. An application of these averages to our national population of incarcerated individuals (currently estimated at 2.4 million) suggests that if the United States were to release the entire incarcerated population today, there would be an expected rearrest of 1,600,000 within three years and 1,838,000 returning to incarceration within five years (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020).

The U.S. incarceration problem is evident in the scope and magnitude by which it incarcerates and its statistical likelihood of re-incarceration after release. As such, there is merit in, and a demonstrated need to consider, the learning experiences of formerly violent offenders who have succeeded in desisting from criminality.

Research Problem

Recidivism has been recognized by scholars and policymakers alike as being one of the most profound challenges faced by American society today (Petersilia, 2009). Despite the statistical likelihood of re-offense, we know relatively little about the process by which some desist from criminality. The inability to explain the process of desistance has led some theorists to remark that the field of desistance has struggled to move beyond "theoretical speculations" (Laub et al., 1998, p. 1). Others have claimed that research on the desistance process has only surfaced insufficient frameworks that have positioned the literature on desistance with "no clear confirming set of findings" (Wright & Wright, 1992, p. 54). Until recently, there has been a

notable absence of empirical research and theoretical discussion that considers the experiences, meaning–making, and trajectories of individuals who—despite having contended with the barriers to progress and losses that come with incarceration—have been successful at desisting (Haggard et al., 2001). While the dearth in our understanding of desistance in itself provides ample reason for further inquiry, consideration of not just the magnitude of the U.S. incarceration problem but the ratio by which individuals are re-incarcerated (76.6%) underscores the urgency for research on desistance from criminality.

Regarding the financial costs of incarceration and recidivism, reports published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2017 estimated the annual cost of mass incarceration in the United States as $182 billion annually. The cost to the government and taxpayers to incarcerate an individual is roughly $75,833 dollars a year, on average. With 76.6% of the 2.4 million individuals incarcerated annually expected to be re-incarcerated, the United States allocates upwards of $139 billion each year on U.S. recidivists.

The high cost of recidivism is compounded when one considers the impact of mass incarceration on human welfare. Research has definitively evidenced the human cost of incarceration, finding that the result for the individual is:

- loss of efficacy and resilience (Le Mont, 2016);
- compounding deterioration of mental and physical health (Massoglia, 2008);
- a deficit and loss of social and financial resources;
- an inability to form new social bonds, ongoing conditions of depression, and mental health illness (Porter, 2014, 2019; Schnittker, 2014).

Other considerations of the cost exist in correlative evidence between elongated sentencing, the creation and sustaining of intergenerational cycles of criminality, and structural

neighborhood disadvantage (Shaw, 2018). Upon release from incarceration, individuals are often left to contend with the aforementioned realities in addition to other unaddressed causalities toward delinquency while coping with the loss of efficacy and emotional trauma brought on by incarceration (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019).

With Previously Incarcerated Individuals (PIIs) commonly contending with personalized and individualistic barriers to reentry (i.e., substance cravings and difficulties in employment, finance, housing, and emotional regulation) released individuals are prone to rely on two strategies (Phillips & Lindsay, 2011). The first strategy is self-isolation that may result from an individual experiencing unconscious guilt, shame, and feelings of inefficacy, or a conscious attempt at removing oneself from social settings in which an individual may feel more prone to, or pressured toward, criminal action. The second strategy is purposeful re-offense. Among recidivists' reasons for their re-offense is a common belief that they can no longer function in society post-incarceration. For members in this second group, Phillips and Lindsay (2011) found there to be a consistent set of supporting reasonings: (a) they lack the resources to abstain from criminality; (b) criminality is the only means by which they can meet basic needs; and (c) efforts to remain in good standing with the law are futile (p. 144).

Despite the challenges that individuals face with incarceration, many have sought to dehumanize incarcerated populations to dismiss the human costs. Yet, the human cost is challenging to ignore considering 2.4 million people are incarcerated (Wagner & Walsh, 2016).In 2016, 8% (192,000) of those incarcerated in the United States were veterans, while 63% (151,200) were the parents of minors. Nearly 81% (1.9 million) of those incarcerated were U.S.-born American citizens. Legal immigrants were 78% less likely to commit crimes than American born citizens (Wagner & Walsh, 2016).

There is a plethora of barriers to successful reentry (e.g., insufficient preparation for the challenges of reintegration, a lack of sufficient social and financial resources) that contribute to a statistically verifiable likelihood that most PII will re-offend and return to the confines of imprisonment. This begs the question: What of those who do not return? What understandings can the learning of former serial offenders offer that could potentially redress the American incarceration problem?

Although contemporary scholars have written about the need to better understand the experiences of PIIs (Hallet, 2012; Olusanya & Cancino, 2012) in order to combat the cyclic nature of criminality and recidivism, as well as the structural, individual, and societal barriers to reentry, there is a dearth of published research that reaches this criterion (Laub et al., 1998; Laub & Sampson, 2001; Ortiz & Jackey, 2019). Dating as far back as 1945, criminologists have borrowed the language of adult learning theorists in an attempt to record what they observed as being pertinent changes in criminal perspectives as a means of explaining wayward and criminal offenses (Glueck & Glueck, 1945). Even so, with the exception of a handful of studies that sought to adopt and adapt the theory of transformative learning (Berger et al., 2017, Decker et al., 2014; Giordano et al., 2003), the majority of research continues to reify and affirm harmful deficit-perspective approaches (Laub et al., 1998; Laub & Sampson, 2001).

If 76.6% of hospitalized individuals released were still chronically ill—to the point of having to return for more extended stays—our society would consider this an urgent and dangerous epidemic. After having exhausted our resources trying to understand the reasons for the recurring illness of released patients, there would assuredly be a study of the hospitalization and post-hospitalization processes that occurred for those made well. Similarly, the epidemic of

recidivism may be aptly addressed by examining the process by which formerly violent offenders have desisted from criminality.

Research Purpose and Research Questions

In light of the research problem, this section serves three essential functions; to (a) distill the research problem presented into an approachable focus, (b) present the research questions that guided the study, and (c) briefly discuss the theoretical lenses from which the research questions stem.

The purpose of this study was to explore the learning processes experienced by individuals classified as formerly violent offenders. Driving this purpose were two assumptions:

1. Acquiring a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the process by which participants desisted from criminality—despite obstacles to reentry and incentive to re-offend—may assist in increasing instances of desistance; and
2. Providing would-be recidivists, and those seeking to support them, with insights into the desistance of others may enable them to better combat the statistical likelihood of re-offense.

In defining the term *desistance* as having operated within the confines of legality for at least five years, I seek to differentiate the term *desistance* from *disengagement* or *deterrence.* The latter terms are often used to refer to a temporary cessation of criminal acts but do not indicate a complete behavioral or dispositional termination (Laub et al., 1998; Laub & Sampson, 2001). Under the applied definition, the term desistance, unlike its near–synonyms, honors the longevity and change permanence implied by transformative learning theory (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 2000; Nerstrom, 2014).

To fully meet the purpose of this research, the following research questions provided the framework for this investigation:

RQ1: What experiences do participants perceive as having been fundamental to their desistance?

RQ2: What role, if any, does self-perception and self-assessment play in participants' desistance from criminality?

RQ3: What do participants perceive as having been the supports or hindrances to their desistance?

RQ4: What recommendations can this research offer to those designing and engaging in desistance education?

This study relied on adult and transformative learning literature to frame a deeper and more nuanced understanding of participants' meaning–making and learning experiences. In addition to providing a common language for how learning experiences influence the way individuals reach desistance from criminality; transformative learning theory provided an avenue for considering the meaning–making structures and journeys toward self-efficacy and that transformative change that we observe as desistance.

While Mezirow's transformative learning theory (2000) provided a strong point of inquiry and an established language from which this study benefited, the transformative learning frameworks provided by Cranton (2016) and Nerstrom (2014) were also beneficial to the study. Both Mezirow and Cranton value inquiry into the manner in which individual's assess their experiences to arrive at nuanced understanding of the meaning–making that occurs during the transformative learning process. Seeking to understand the ways in which individuals personally make meaning of their experiences proved integral to the goal and intentions of this

research. Also guiding my research was the work of Nerstrom (influenced heavily by Patricia Cranton) who offered a 4-phase transformative learning model designed for qualitative research and case study.

Lastly, informed by this research's pilot study, I have included Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) work on self-efficacy and efficacy appraisal as part of this research's theoretical framing. This choice was in response to consistent articulations in pilot interviews of *belief in ability* and *possession of ability* as being different considerations in the discussion of transformative change and desistance.

Research Design Overview

In seeking to gain insight from participants' transformative learning experiences, this qualitative research was conducted as a naturalistic field inquiry with elements of a case study approach. In utilizing this approach in which participants' descriptions and perceptions of their experiences are primary and rich-data sources (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Merriam, 2001) contextualized through a case study method of analysis, I was able to discover themes and analyze patterns in the transformative learning experiences of the participant population.

In line with Merriam's (2001) admonition that in cases in which an "investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight," the investigator "must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61). Therefore, I sought a sample of participants that:

- had desisted from criminality, which is defined in this study as having been free of criminal activity for at least five years;
- were former recidivist/violent offenders within New York State (by way of violent crime after having already served a sentence of at least two years within New York State);

- self-identified and were legally recorded as having been guilty of class A or B felony;
- were willing and capable of completing the demographic survey and all components of a 60–120-minute interview; and
- were between the ages of 22 and 49.

To best serve the purpose of the research, in-depth interviews served as the primary data collection method. As part of this study, each participant received an alpha-numeric pseudonym and generated an illustrative timeline of their desistance (further discussed in Chapter III). Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and then analyzed using the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti. This software enabled me to link files related to each interview and search for codes and themes across interviews.

Initial analyses utilized the listening guide strategy (Maxwell & Miller, 2007), which entailed reading interview transcriptions multiple times and discerning different information during each reading. Subsequent analyses utilized coding and thematic analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Guest et al., 2012; Saldaña, 2012). A strict audit trail was kept through my development and maintaining of a memo journal, allowing for reflexivity (Eriksson et al., 2012).

Researcher Perspectives

Having served as an educator and education leader within incarcerated spaces for more than a decade, serving now as a consultant on rehabilitation and reentry programming, I have been a primary witness to the rate at which released individuals return to spaces of incarceration. Having an informed awareness of the barriers to successful reentry/desistance and how carceral experiences add to racial, health, and economic disparities, I acknowledge that a driving influence in the undertaking of this work was a personal desire to utilize adult learning tools and theories in the service of social justice outcomes.

My intimate and direct experiences with incarceration and carceral circuitry provide added context for considerations made in this research. I also recognize where my perspectives and assumptions may be a liability based on and informed by first-hand experiences. More specifically, I acknowledge that my personal experience could have resulted in the biasing of judgment in research design and interpretation of findings. To overcome the influence of my own biases, I provided an explicit articulation of my assumptions and theoretical orientations throughout the research process. I have done this formally to continually critique my perspectives and in auditing this inquiry to ensure that the research and findings remain appropriately unbiased.

The iterative cycle (evaluation, critique, recalibration) of steps taken to mitigate the influence of personal assumption and bias in this research also included the practice of eliciting input from professional colleagues and advisors throughout the entirety of this undertaking. Moreover, to address subjectivity and strengthen this research's credibility, various procedural safeguards were employed, including employing the multiple source method (triangulation) and engaging in peer examination strategy with professional colleagues.

Assumptions of the Study

With extensive experience in incarcerated settings, I developed perspectives on the experience of incarceration, as well as reentry programming, the prison reentry industry, and mass incarceration. These views unquestionably drove the desire to conduct this research and influence how the study's purpose and the research questions were framed (Creswell, 2013). Embedded in the central inquiry question of this research was an assumption that individuals who have defied the statistical likelihood of recidivism have succeeded due to purposeful action and behavioral changes based on their learning. Tied to this are assumptions that the learning

antecedents of those actions and behavioral changes are observable and identifiable. Additionally, the application of this study's research method assumes participants' ability to represent their histories and learning experiences accurately. Lastly, by basing findings on themes that emerge in participant experiences, I assumed a resultant minimization of impact of the skew of individual perceptions and imagined recollection(s) upon the study.

Rationale and Significance

Aside from being an academic endeavor that promised to provide further depth of insight into the process of transformative learning through an exploration of the learning experiences of participants, the undertaking of this study is an application of contemporary transformative learning theory toward social justice cause. This transformative theory application is well in step with the concepts on which theory draws.

While a modest search into modern published applications of adult and transformative learning theories may lead some to believe that these lenses live and breathe only in discussions of organizational change and management, a consideration of where transformative learning began proves otherwise. Mezirow and other contemporary theorists point to the theory as having emerged from the disruptive, emancipatory, and socially reformative focuses of work done by Kuhn (1962), Freire (1970), and Habermas (1971, 1984). Transformative learning, built on theories and concepts of theorists who examined cataclysmic shifts in development, identity, and perspective, is latent with the potential to be used as a tool for societal betterment.

It is my hope that even a perfunctory consideration of this research may evidence how emically sourced insight from transformative learning experiences could lead to improvements in the manner in which our society addresses deficits in public welfare.

In its most literal application, this research provides insights necessary to address the crisis of recidivism and mass incarceration—and in doing so, can potentially be instructive for those seeking to address criminality, transience, resource insecurity, and wide-spread issues of mental health and dehabilitation.

Moreover, in having attempted an examination of the transformative learning experiences and adjoining efficacious appraisals of individuals that society would argue are the least likely and least equipped for change, this study examined transformative learning over a cognitive distance that potentially offers a disaggregation of occurrences in ways that provides new insights. These insights might be wielded for equity, for an undressing of internalized hegemony, through the development of a framework for transformative learning in service to arrival at desistance from criminality and violent offense—impacting not only individual lives but enhancing community and building social capital in the interest of a safer, more opportune, and more just society.

Definition of Acronyms and Key Terminology Used in This Study

This section defines key terms, first in congruence with generally accepted usages as relevant to the topics of adult learning theories and desistance, and second with the specificity necessary to distinguish between terms commonly seen as being synonymous. With many of these terms used variably by theorists and rarely defined, I included this section in hopes of providing specific terminology in a manner that will produce a common language to aid any who wish to interact with the presented research:

- **carceral circuitry:** a meta-conceptualization used by prison scholars and critical carceral geographers to refer to manners in which criminalization, socioeconomics, felonization, education, criminal justice entities, and institutions congressed the

aforementioned (inclusive of industrial systems and media) and influence the social welfare, mobility, and agility of those impacted by carceral institutions and their partnering agencies (Gilmore, 2007; Peck, 2003; Tyner, 2013). While this term can encapsulate specific interactions with individuals, it more generally considers larger spheres of influence such as everyday social experiences that result from collective societal, class, national, and community perspectives.

- **carceral geography:** a meta-conceptualization of institutional continuity that combines supra-, sub-, inter-, intra-, and extra-institutional constructs to show the influence and impact of dynamics and boundaries that extend from and beyond carceral spaces to form a network of carceral landscapes. Geography mapped to represent a unique landscape, or broader network of landscapes may include seemingly unrelated spaces such as immigration detention centers (Gill, 2016; Loyd et al., 2013; Mountz et al., 2012); homes (Moran & Keinänen, 2012); factories, hospitals, and psychiatric asylums (Curtis, 2010; Curtis et al., 2013; Philo, 2004;); hotels (Minca & Ong, 2015); schools (Gallagher, 2010); impoverished areas of cities (Herbert, 2009); and ghettos or camps (Marcuse, 1998). Worth noting is that carceral geography exists and progresses apart from any objective rise in criminality (Gilmore, 2007; Wacquant, 2002).
- **critical learning incident:** Also referred to as *critical incident*, critical learning incidents are learning events in which learners arrive at significant learning as a result of having experienced or observed a combination of factors at a given moment to have been effective, exceptional, or personally meaningful (Brookfield, 1994). The term *critical* refers to the circumstances described in the incident as playing an

essential role in determining learning outcomes. While critical learning incidents are generally defined as being evidenced by their leading to personal growth (Butterfield et al., 2005), I seeks to circumvent the subjective connotation of this criterion by amending the definition to include any experiences or observations that result in learning and personal change. This definition is supported by Brookfield (1990a, 1990b), who categorizes critical incidents as being successes or failures, positing that inquiries that approach the critical incidents more comprehensively across the spectrum of outcomes benefit from a fuller picture of a person's assumptions. Regarding the use of critical incidents as a tool, Brookfield (1990a) wrote, "The purpose is to enter another's frame of reference so that that person's structures of understanding and interpretive filters can be experienced and understood... as closely as possible to the way they are experienced and understood by the learner" (p. 180).

- **desistance:** generally defined as both the underlying causal processes to the termination or cessation of criminal activity, as well as the state of having terminated a criminal career or pathway (Laub et al., 1998).
- **deterrence***:* a short-term or temporary cessation of criminal acts, usually due to perceived certainty and fear of punishment, with no indication of a complete behavioral or dispositional termination (Paternoster, 1989).
- **disengagement***:* the event or occurrence of de-identification from criminal membership or the process of declining embeddedness in criminal offense and communities and circuitries engaging in criminal offense (Decker et al., 2014; Moloney et al., 2009; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011; Sweeten et al., 2013).

- **efficacy:** Also referred to as *self-efficacy*, efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997).
- **efficacy appraisal:** a self-appraisal and/or self-assessment in which one attempts to determine their ability to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1997).
- **incarceration:** confinement in a jail or prison, before or after a criminal conviction.
- **jail:** a facility designed to confine persons after arrest and before trial, or for a brief period upon conviction for a lesser offense.
- **previously incarcerated individuals (PIIs):** individuals who formerly served a prison term.
- **prisoner reentry industry (PRI):** considered to be a by-product of mass incarceration (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019), the Prison Reentry Industry has the stated purpose of helping the formerly incarcerated reenter society and achieve a new "law-abiding" status. Traditional criminological studies point to high recidivism rates in the United States as proof that U.S. reentry fails to rehabilitate offenders. Oritz & Jackey (2019) posited that although the PRI purports to rehabilitate offenders, it operates to ensure that the formerly incarcerated remain trapped in a cycle of failure by using mechanisms that include parole conditions and fee-based reentry services.
- **prison:** a facility designed to confine persons after a trial for extended periods upon conviction for a serious offense.
- **reentry:** the logistical transition to, or process by which individuals who were held in prisons or jails, return into the community.

- **recidivism:** refers to a person's relapse into criminal behavior. It is measured by criminal acts that result in re-arrest, re-conviction or return to prison.
- **reintegration:** the process of reentry into society from incarceration. Reintegration includes the reinstatement and navigation of freedoms and opportunities not previously had by individuals due to being incarcerated.
- **sentencing:** the post-conviction stage of the criminal justice process, in which the defendant is brought before the court for the imposition of a penalty or consequence.
- **transformative learning:** "the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning schemes, habits of mind, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8); a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions (Schugurensky, 2004).
- **violent offender:** the law and criminology generally refer to a violent offender as being an individual convicted and punished by a term of imprisonment exceeding one year for an occurrence in which the individual: carried, possessed, or used a firearm or dangerous weapon without legal precedent or licensure; was responsible for the unlawful death of, or serious bodily injury to another person, and has one or more prior convictions for a felony crime of violence involving the use or attempted use of force against a person with the intent to cause death or serious bodily harm.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of the Chapter

In designing this study, I sought to gain a greater understanding of transformative learning within the context of the desistance from criminality as it occurred for 30 individuals formerly incarcerated for violent offenses in New York State. This literature review serves as the theoretical foundation for this study and offers a selective and critical review of relevant theory and research. Through this literature review, I was able to generate a knowledge base of use in building a greater understanding of the factors that contribute to the promotion and catalyzation of transformative learning.

In the interest of generating a literature review that was both selective and critical, I gave attention to a broader consideration of authors and topics than could be captured within the boundaries of this review. In selecting authors for inclusion, considerations made included relevance of their work to the topics explored in this research and recognized influence on the bodies of literature that informed this study and its design, namely: transformative learning, efficacy beliefs, and desistance.

The research that informed this literature review included nationally-based and internationally-sourced books, dissertations, articles, research studies, and published proceedings from conferences. While this literature review does, at times, offer critical comparisons and contrasting of selected authors in order to purposefully alert the reader to relevant commonalities, differences, and gaps—the inquiry into the literature produced a list of more notable, prolific, and relevant works and authors than could be applied to this instance of research.

I utilized three assessment criteria in selecting authors for inclusion in the review. The first criterion was assessing whether the author(s) or work had a significant impact on research and practice in the area of interest (with other relevant work aligning or citing the author as seminal to the field). The second was assessing whether the author(s) or work explicitly informed my perspective on the topic(s) of transformative learning, efficacy, or desistance. The third was assessing whether the concept(s) explored in the author's work provided a reliable and significant connection or relevance to the research.

Section I, Transformative Learning, draws on the work of Mezirow (2000), Cranton (2016), and Nerstrom (2014). This section contains an overview of Mezirow's learning theory, a review of Mezirow's ten steps of transformative learning, and Mezirow's theory in context with other transformative learning perspectives. Next is a consideration of Patricia Cranton's perspective on transformative learning and Cranton's work on the Habits of Mind. Section I of this literature review ends with considering Nerstrom's Transformative Learning Model and her four phases of transformative learning.

Section II, Social Cognitive Theory and Efficacy, begins with an overview of Bandura's social cognitive theory to provide context for his theory of efficacy. The section provides an in-depth consideration of Bandura's work on Efficacious Sources and Appraisals. The topics covered are how individuals are influenced by enactive mastery and vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and somatic responses to stress (physiological and affective states).

Bandura (1997) provides a means of disaggregating the sources and variables that influence an individual's appraisal and perception of their generalized and outcome-specific efficacies. In considering the process of transformative learning, the categorization of efficacious sources provided by Bandura's work provides an organizing principle for the types of learning,

supports, and hindrances participants experienced during their process of transformative learning and desistance.

Section III of this literature review, Literature on Desistance, contains an overview of desistance, a review of relevant desistance terminology, and the current applications and implications of adult learning theory in studies on desistance. Finally, the chapter closes with an interpretive summary of the literature review and a presentation of this study's conceptual framework.

Transformative Learning

Overview of Mezirow's Learning Theory

The theoretical foundation of this study was Mezirow's theory of transformative learning. Widely acknowledged as being the founder of the concept of transformative learning (Brookfield, 1987), Mezirow himself saw his theory as being in progress even decades after he first introduced it in 1991. Within the framework of Mezirow's theory are the influences of Kuhn (1962), Freire (1970), Habermas (1971, 1984) and other prominent theorists from across a range of social science disciplines (Calleja, 2014; Kitchenham, 2008). While the ideas and vernacular of transformative learning have been popularized due to the ease with which its terms can be utilized to explain personal and organizational growth, Mezirow's theory is somewhat stringent in defining both the process and outcome of transformative learning. Perhaps the best entry toward a deeper and more nuanced understanding of transformative learning is a clearer understanding of what it is not.

Mezirow (2000) defined learning generically as "the process of using prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide

future action" (p. 5). This type of learning, while a component of transformative learning, differs from transformative learning. Defining transformative learning, Mezirow wrote (2008) that it is

> the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning schemes, habits of mind, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (2000, p. 8)

The distinctions between transformative learning and other types of learning become more evident when we consider how Mezirow categorizes learning into the domains of instrumental and communicative learning:

- **instrumental learning:** In its purest form, instrumental learning is how we learn to do things in the tangible world. Empirical and analytic in its nature, this type of learning often occurs due to task-oriented problem-solving and the consideration of causal relationships.
- **communicative learning:** Mezirow's definition of communicative learning, influenced by the work of Habermas (1971, 1984), is rooted in individuals understanding the meaning of what is communicated by others—specifically, their "values, ideals, feelings, moral decisions, and such concepts as freedom, justice, love, labor, autonomy, commitment and democracy" (Mezirow 1991, p. 8). It is as a result of this learning that individuals create and interpret social norms. Unlike instrumental learning, for which there are objective indicators of truth, there is no objective indicator of truth when it comes to communicative learning, only challenging, validating, or justification of specific beliefs (Mezirow, 1994).

While neither of these domains exclusively contains the process of transformative learning, each may operate under conditions that result in an individual having an emancipatory

or transformative learning experience. Expounding on how this occurs, there are three main structures that Mezirow (Mezirow, 2000) refers to: habits of mind, points of view, and frames of reference (comprised of a habit of mind and a point of view).

Mezirow defined a *habit of mind* (also referred to as a perspective) as "a set of assumptions—broad, generalized, orienting predispositions that function as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 17). There are various categories under which we can place a habit of mind—inclusive of sociolinguistic, moral-ethical, epistemic, philosophical, psychological, and aesthetic predispositions. Often comprising our habits of mind are the un-critiqued and acculturated learnings of our childhood. Informed by the often less variable and limited social environments of our youth, and by the individuals and belief systems that hold dominant presences in our childhood and adolescence, habits of mind operate as our most deeply entrenched meaning structures—and exist as those which are the most difficult to change.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand the next component, point of view, is to understand how it connects—and is generated initially—from our habits of mind. It may be illustrated by likening habits of mind to the roots of a tree or a plant and considering the branches and leaves to be points of view. Our point of view consists of meaning schemes, which are "sets of immediate, specific beliefs, feelings, attitudes and value judgments" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 18). Our very first points of view are often extensions of our earliest habits of mind—lengthened and strengthened over time. While both habits of mind and points of view may be resistant to change, our points of view are comparably more exposed. As a result of this exposure, we receive feedback on our point(s) of view and are more aware of them than our habits of mind (Mezirow, 1997).

Further clarity on the relationship between these two meaning structures develops in Merriam et al.'s. (2007) consideration of Mezirow's exemplar. In this exemplar, we are given ethnocentrism (the belief that one ethnic group is superior to others) as a habit of mind. A point of view that may be generated from this is a specific belief that an individual has regarding particular groups of people outside of one's group (Mezirow, 1997, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, pp. 132–133).

Just as tree branches may be removed or altered without impact to a root system, a point of view can be removed or altered without impacting the habit of mind. However, if enough of the branches or leaves are removed or altered, we would find the roots system changing to accommodate an altered function—so, too, is the case with the impact of altered or removed points of view. There is a point at which the degree of alteration will change the function and form of the existing root system—the habit of mind. A frame of reference, as briefly mentioned, is made up of two dimensions: a habit of mind and a point of view (Mezirow, 2000). When we consider that transformative learning takes place when there is a change in our point of view or habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000), we reach the understanding that transformative learning experiences alter our frames of reference.

Expounding on his theory to delineate the common misconception of transformative learning as an everyday occurrence toward a more precise understanding, Mezirow provided further conditional criteria for what constitutes transformative learning under his theory. Mezirow (2000) wrote that transformative learning is:

> the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning schemes, habits of mind, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (p. 8)

From this excerpt, we extract two essential principles that further inform our understanding of Mezirow's theory. The first is in the descriptive criteria. In stating that the outcome of transformative learning is an individual becoming "more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective," Mezirow distinguished transformative learning from the impact of ideologies that result in individuals being prejudiced against others, unjust, biased, mal-intended, harmful, static, concretized, or naïve.

The second essential understanding that the excerpt provides is that, rather than being an inexplicable happenstance, randomized occurrence, or exclusively being the direct effect of a singular cognitive action, transformative learning exists as a process. Moreover, while there are instances in which transformative learning may be the result of an epochal change to an individual's habits of mind, the process by which an individual arrives at transformative learning may instead be made up of more incremental, slower changes to one's points of view (Mezirow, 2000).

Mezirow's Ten Steps of Transformative Learning

Mezirow's transformative learning theory has undergone several revisions since his 1978 research study in which this theory was first introduced (originally called *perspective transformation)*, yet one central element has remained—Mezirow's ten steps. Renamed and later referred to by Mezirow (1991, 2000) as the ten steps of transformative learning, the steps' content has remained relatively unchanged.

Although the order of Mezirow's steps can vary, transformative learning most often begins with a triggering event (sometimes referred to by Mezirow as a *disorienting experience*). This triggering event can be a singular significant event or a cluster of events over time. The steps (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22) that follow the disorienting dilemma are self-examination with

feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame and a critical assessment of assumptions. Next are recognizing that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and an exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions. Following this recognition and exploration, the individual plans a course of action and acquires knowledge and skills for implementing said plan. As individuals provisionally try new roles, they build competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships. Finally, individuals reintegrate into their lives based on the conditions of their new perspective.

While in his early work (1991), Mezirow seemed to suggest that these steps were likely to happen in succession, in his later work (Mezirow, 2000) he asserted that it is possible to undergo transformative change without chronological adherence, or engagement in all, of ten of his outlined steps. Still, Mezirow's steps offer a concise and methodical way of examining the experience of transformative learning. Individuals may not experience the steps in succession (or all of the steps)—but the steps themselves remain an effective means of cataloging individuals' experiences.

Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory in Context with Other Perspectives

The distinctions between transformative learning and other types of learning become further evident when seen as conjunctive with the definitions offered by Miller and Seller (1990). Miller and Seller offered three categorizations of learning: (a) transmissional, (b) transactional, and (c) transformational. *Transmissional learning* is the most common, uncritiqued, and primarily informational. In this categorization, there is a transmission of knowledge from person A to person B. Person A is the dispenser of knowledge, and person B is a recipient of it. Synonymous with what Freire (1970) described as the "banking" model of education, within this construct, learning is both passive and static, with learning achievement determined by students'

ability to demonstrate, replicate, or retransmit a designated body of knowledge. While there are instances in which this type of learning may serve as an entry to other types of learning, and while useful in the capturing of protocols and procedures, this type of transaction does not qualify as learning under Mezirow's (2000) definition and would be categorized by Mezirow as instrumental learning.

Next, Miller and Seller (1990) offered the transactional categorization of learning. This term closely aligns with the definition of general learning offered by Mezirow (2000). Miller and Seller went on to describe *transactional learning* as learning in which the learner negotiates previously held information with new knowledge in order to create new meaning, with achieved learning being a learner's ability to utilize newly constructed knowledge to solve real-world problems, create externally valued products, or offer valued performance. This constructivist description is synonymous with the process and metric for evidence offered by Mezirow's (2000) definition of learning and may occur in either or both of the previously outlined domains of instrumental or communicative learning.

Lastly, Miller and Seller offered the term *transformational* and articulated its definition as synonymous with what Mezirow referred to as transformative learning. Like Mezirow, Miller and Seller offered a definition in which learners discover their full potential as members of society and human beings. *Transformational learning* occurs when an individual's reflection on their experiences elicits a transformation of consciousness that leads to greater understanding and care for self, others, and the environment. Miller and Seller's transformational learning aptly mirrors the modality, magnitude, and outcome of Mezirow's transformative learning. Fittingly, both distinguish this rarer learning from more general learning by pointing toward developments that leave the learner fundamentally changed in their perspectives and their resulting actions.

With a critical requirement of transformative learning being a fundamental shift in perspective and a resulting application of newly constructed knowledge, the circumstances and antecedents of transformation are facets deserving of more purposeful inquiry. With perspective change being a result of an individual critiquing of priorly held—sometimes acculturated—beliefs, Mezirow (2000) recognized that in order for transformative change to occur, an individual must not dismiss new information simply because it is incongruent with their existing frames of reference, and make a critique of old understandings in order to apply new interpretations. The application of new interpretations often requires monumental changes in the lives and behaviors of individuals. A question that emerges is: Why do some possess the efficacy to enact change while others, who are in seemingly similar circumstances, do not? Mezirow himself (2000) posited supports and hindrances to transformative change as unique but, in offering a theory in progress, does little to articulate what these supports and hindrances may be.

In articulating the process of transformative learning in steps, Mezirow (1991) indicated that such supports and hindrances may play their most substantial role in shaping individuals' self-perceived efficacy as they engage in the process of transformative change. Beyond the first three steps (i.e., step 1: disorienting dilemma; step 2: self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame; and step 3: critical assessment of assumptions) are four steps that require efficacy and action:

- **step 4:** an exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;
- **step 5:** planning a course of action;
- **step 7:** acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan; and
- **step 10:** reintegration into one's life based on conditions dictated by one's perspective.

What is most notable, however, are the manners in which the three remaining phases suggest the gaining of efficacy to be integral to the transformative learning process (i.e., step 8: provisional trying of new roles; step 4: a recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared; and step 9: building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships). While engagement in a strictly theoretical consideration of these components must overlook the role efficacy in steps 5, 6, 7, and 10 due to the limitless number of possible influences, a case-study approach permits the opportunity to look more closely at what supports and hindrances affected participants and by what modality they impacted their perceived self-efficacy. Moreover, with steps 8, 4, and 9 appearing to be articulations of having gained efficacy, there is an increased opportunity to examine the sources of efficacy perceived by participants. One means of advancing efficacy considerations (implied in Mezirow's ten steps) from assumption to an observable occurrence for analysis is to apply Albert Bandura's work (1977, 1991, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2001).

Cranton's Perspectives on Transformative Learning

Patricia Cranton's *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide to Theory and Practice* (2016) is both a surmising acknowledgment and a critique of the field of transformative learning. Prodigious in her understanding of both the theory and the application of transformative learning, her work is known for being approachable and widely influential (Wang, 2017). While Cranton essentially ascribed to Mezirow's definition of transformative learning (Cranton & Taylor 2012; Cranton, 2016), throughout her work is a theme of wanting more than what she felt the literature of the field had to offer.

As a preface to considerations and challenges she posed, perhaps in hopes that readers would find better questions in place of solutions, Cranton routinely referred to the work of John

Dirkx's conceptualization of intuition, imagination, and the formation of the self as transformative learning elements that she viewed as a complementary to Mezirow's theory. As early as 2005, Cranton referred to Drikx's (2000) extrarational perspective, which drew heavily on Jungian's (1971) concept of individualization as the process by which individuals differentiate and distinguish themselves from a general or collective psychology (as cited in Dirkx et al., 2006). Resting on Drikx's (2000) suggestion that individualization is an ongoing psychic process aided by exercises that explore one's self, alignment to social and ideological membership, and affective existence (the "soul"), Cranton's work was fundamentally dedicated to the resolution of what she saw as primary barriers to the progress of Transformative Learning theory.

While there is ample evidence of Cranton's considerations of these challenges before the publication of her 2012 text (Dirkx et al., 2006), it is in this publication that Cranton first publicly asserted what she saw as challenges faced by the field of transformative learning. The first challenge is what Cranton described as a fragmentation caused by the oppositional placement of burgeoning theoretical approaches rather than integrating concepts toward the creation of a holistic theory. The second challenge Cranton identified was in the methodology applied to transformative learning research. She wrote of the need to develop new and more innovative means of conducting research (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Cranton even went as far as to suggest that one means of expanding transformative research methodologies could be through applying art-based elements such as narrative inquiry, portraiture, and the like.

In her 2016 text, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Practice* (3rd ed.), Cranton returned to her early assertions (2012) of what she saw as the field's primary challenges. The 2016 text differed from its predecessors in its inclusion of an expanded consideration of

what Cranton saw as a necessary marriage between Mezirow's (2000) perspective of cognitive rationality as the vehicle of transformative learning and Dirkx's (2000) extrarational conceptualizations of the transformative learning process.

Of note is the fact that Cranton dedicated a portion of the opening of her 2016 text to upholding the idea that transformative learning must be voluntary and, as a result, is always, at least to a degree, self-directed. Cranton used this idea of the need for self-direction to raise consideration of whether those who are "completely oppressed" (Cranton, 2016, p. 6) can participate in the process of transformative learning. In connection to this point, Cranton offered Mezirow's (2000) assertion that individuals living in extreme social conditions, impoverished, or experiencing resource insecurity are less inclined to participate in transformative learning and Merriam's (2004) suggestion "that people need a certain level of cognitive development and even a certain level of education" (Cranton, 2016, p. 6). With most participants in this study not having experienced the benefit of extended formal education and having experienced recurring resource insecurity in many cases, Cranton's consideration raised significant inquiry points for this study. With most participants having faced conditions that made them less apt to experience transformative learning, there was a priority to determine if participants had experienced transformative learning despite the presence of factors suggested to lower the likelihood and determine how transformative learning occurred for those who experienced it.

Cranton on the Habits of Mind

There is no shortage of studies that utilize Mezirow's transformative learning model; however, a relatively small percentage seems to make nuanced considerations of the habits of mind offered by Mezirow (1991, 2000). Cranton (2016) provided an overview of habits of mind's six forms, providing context for each. In her 2016 text, Cranton identified the six habits

of mind as—epistemic, sociolinguistic, psychological, moral–ethical, philosophical, and aesthetic. She defined *epistemic* habits of mind as pertaining to knowledge, learning styles, learning preferences, and how we acquire and use knowledge (pp. 19–20). *Sociolinguistic* habits of mind are associated with social norms, cultural expectations, and how we use language (p. 20). Included in *psychological* habits is how people see themselves—their self-concept, needs, inhibitions, anxieties, and fears (p. 20). *Moral–ethical* habits of mind incorporate conscience and morality. It is how people determine good and evil, how they will act on their views of goodness, and the extent to which they see themselves as responsible for advocating for justice in the world create a perspective for making meaning out of the world (p. 21). *Philosophical* habits of mind relate to transcendental worldview, philosophy, or religious doctrine. Most religious systems contain a complex web of values, beliefs, guides to behavior, and rules for living (p. 21). *Aesthetic* habits of mind include our values, attitudes, tastes, judgments, and standards about beauty (p. 21). Aesthetic habits of mind are, in large part, sociolinguistic habits of mind and determined by the social norms of the community and culture (p. 21).

While Cranton defined each of the habits of mind in manners that offer distinctions between them, she concluded her defining of the habits by writing, "Each of these six kinds of habits of mind is interdependent and inter-related" (p. 21). These definitions were useful in categorizing participants' experiences, and they were of particular aid in identifying trends that evidenced a connection between habits of mind and sources of influence.

Notably, Cranton concluded her discussion of the habits of mind with a critique of Mezirow's (1991) definition of these habits as distorted meaning perspectives (Cranton, 2016). Cranton argued that Mezirow's use of the term *distorted* inherently suggested an objective reality or truth incongruent with the constructivist view upon which transformative learning operates.

Cranton then suggested that habits of mind are better thought of unexamined or unquestioned rather than distorted as this would allow for their conceptualization as subjective truths that do not necessarily require abandonment once examined.

To support her assertion for the need for her updated articulation, Cranton referenced a diverse group of adult developmental theory perspectives that she saw as a corroborative (e.g., Taylor & Elias, 2012). The consideration Cranton offered can be seen in some ways, like a step toward what was one of Cranton's primary goals—establishing an integrative perspective on transformative learning theory built on diverse and recent work in the field of adult learning.

Nerstrom on Transformative Learning

While heavily influenced by Cranton's work, Nerstrom has not written extensively on or directly addressed the barriers to progress that Cranton put at the forefront of her work (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Cranton, 2016). Instead, Nerstrom's most significant contribution to Transformative Learning has been providing an approachable visual model (2014, 2017). Although I take issue with Nerstrom's assertion that no visual model of transformative learning existed before the creation of her model (Nerstrom, 2014), the model put forth by Nerstrom does shift the focus from more complex frameworks provided by other theorists (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 2000) to a more straightforward approach for driving case study research. Nerstrom's Transformative Learning Model essentially reduces the transformative learning model into four broader segments: (a) having experiences; (b) making assumptions; (c) challenging perspectives; and (d) transformative learning.

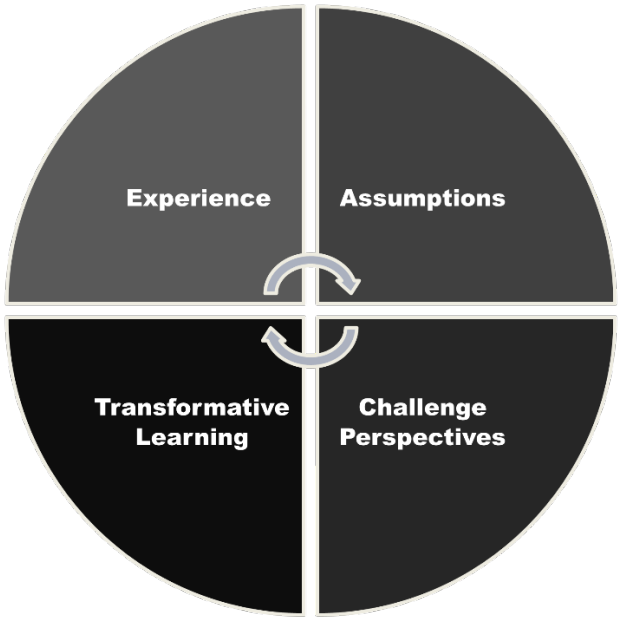
Nerstrom's Transformative Learning Model

Nerstrom's transformative learning model also differs from Mezirow's theory (2000) in that her model presents transformative learning as a sequential process. In Nerstrom's model

(2014), transformative learners encounter all phases of the model, and entry into the process may begin in any phase. Nerstrom's model offers a visual representation of transformative learning as a continuous cycle in which individuals are increasingly receptive to transformative learning experiences.

Figure 1

Nerstrom's Transformative Learning Model



Note. Adapted from "An emerging model for transformative learning" by N. Nerstrom, 2014, *Adult Education Research Conference*, p. 328 (https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2014/papers/55/). CC BY-NC 4.0.

Nerstrom's Four Phases of Transformative Learning

By broadening the categories of transformative learning in ways that can accommodate several more specific processes described by Dirkx (2000), Cranton (2016), and Mezirow (2000), Nerstrom steered researchers away from a temptation to fit wholly into prescriptive models. Nerstrom's model, instead, encouraged inductive inquiry and thematic analysis of learning experiences in ways authentic to case study research. Nerstrom's visual

conceptualization finds its strength in its provision of a platform on which there can be an integration of transformative learning's seemingly incongruent theories.

In Nerstrom's 2014 article, *An Emerging Model for Transformative Learning* (p. 328), she described each of the four phases as follows. The first phase, *experience*, is the impetus of our learning and belief patterns. It includes everything that has occurred in an individual's lifetime and stems from our environment and interactions with others, from which learning—such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, and insights—occurs. The second phase, *assumptions*, is the active formation, receipt, and construction of values, beliefs, and the lens through which we view the world. The third phase, *challenging of perspectives*, occurs when information from new experiences, both cognitive and affective, is reflected upon, and individuals challenge their deeply held assumptions and/or consider new perspectives. The last phase, *transformative learning*, refers to an individual adopting and acting upon a new perspective and viewing themselves and others through a more encompassing lens. The cycle of phases then continues with transformative learning becoming a new experience that leads to openness for further learning.

Nerstrom's model leaves ample room for researchers to comfortably and inductively emerge themes in individuals' experiences during research in its more macro approach to how its phases occur. While an effective means of categorizing the process of transformative learning, Nerstrom's model's lack of nuanced description may mean that a researcher working solely from the descriptions provided by Nerstrom (2014) may overlook significant occurrences in the process that are more explicitly outlined in work such as Mezirow's (2000) and Cranton's (2016).

In the related interest of gathering more nuanced descriptions of what occurred for participants through a consideration of why and how they were influenced toward specific reasonings, actions, and mean–making, the next section of this literature review considers the contributions of Albert Bandura's (1977, 1997) work to this research.

Social Cognitive Theory and Efficacy

Overview of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, initially referred to as social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Hergenhahn & Olson, 2007), is among the most influential theories on understanding human behavior. Providing insight into the realm of social cognitive theory and one of the manners in which individuals learn, namely through the observation of others' behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes—Bandura (1977) wrote:

> Most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how to perform new behaviors, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action. (p. 22)

In his 1977 text, *Social Learning Theory,* Bandura delved into his first comprehensive articulation of observational learning. In this work, he explained human behavior as a continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. Bandura then explicates factors that determine the degree to which observations impact a learner. Among the factors that Bandura cites are an individual's characteristics (i.e., sensory capacities, arousal level, perceptual set, past reinforcement) and the distinctiveness, affective valence, prevalence, complexity, functional value of the observed.

At its core, social learning theory operates on a process made up of the components of retention, reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977):

- **retention:** how well an individual remembers what they observed and includes symbolic coding, mental images, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal, and motor rehearsal.
- **reproduction:** the replication or recreating of what they observed. This includes an individual's ability to reproduce an observed action or occurrence as a result of their physical capabilities and the degree to which they can generate an accurate reproduction and self-observe.
- **motivation:** a reason to imitate an observed behavior or action and includes the desire for promised or imagined incentives resulting from various logic paths, such as reasoning resulting from an observed outcome, logic toward an outcome imagined outcome, comparison of observational data, and contrasting of a past occurrence.

In this way, social learning theory bears a resemblance to observational learning concepts first introduced by Miller and Dollard (1941) and the general behaviorist orientation of observational learning. Bandura's work, however, marked a significant break from what were dominant theories of his time. Central to Bandura's work, and contrary to his predecessors' work, is the separation of an individual's observations and the act of imitation. For observational learning theorists like Miller and Dollard, there was a foundational belief that imitation was a necessary component of observational learning.

Hergenhahn and Olson (2007) explained the perspective held by advocates of traditional observational learning theory by writing, "If imitative responses were not made and reinforced, no learning would take place. For them, imitative learning was the result of observation, overt responding, and reinforcement" (p. 392). Deviating from a focus on overt behavioral change to observational learning's cognitive process, Bandura maintained that an individual can learn from

observation without imitating what was learned (Lefrancois, 2000). It was one year before the publication of his seminal 1977 text that Bandura published an article titled, *Learning: Systems, models, and theories* and wrote the following on this concept of non-imitative learning, which he wrote that virtually all learning phenomena resulting from direct experiences could occur on a vicarious basis through observation of other people's behavior and its consequences for the observer (1976, p. 392). In this same 1976 text, Bandura wrote about another characteristic that separates his theory from his peers—self-regulation. In this publication, Bandura introduced the concept of vicarious observational learning and contended that "persons can regulate their own behavior to some extent by visualizing self-generated consequences" (392).

In presenting these concepts of vicarious learning and visualization, we see an early glimpse of the shifts that will occur in both the focus and the articulation of social cognitive theory that have occurred throughout Bandura's career. In his seminal 1977 text, *Social Learning Theory*, Bandura first introduced the concept of self-efficacy, which today dominates the focus of his academic work but at the time existed for many as an additional component—a footnote, of the more extensive work. Moreover, Bandura's early work received skepticism from many, mainly due to behaviorism being a dominant paradigm of the era. At the time, the behaviorist notion promoted the belief that reasoning and other cognitive processes were unobservable and relatively inconsequential toward behavioral outcomes.

In his most recent writing on efficacy, Bandura (1997) asserted that an appraisal of several factors ultimately determines a person's efficacy levels. Bandura categorized these factors as the outcomes of past actions, persuasion to act from others, observation of others and their behavior, and one's own physical and emotional state (Bandura, 1991, 1993, 1997, 2000,

2001). In documenting and analyzing these factors in the narratives and experiences of participants, I chose to codify the four sources of efficacy offered by Bandura (1997):

- **enactive mastery experiences**: Sometimes referred to as "mastery experiences," these experiences serve as indicators of capability and occur when individuals' judgments of their performance influence their perceived efficacies.
- **vicarious experiences:** These experiences alter efficacy beliefs by transmitting competencies and comparison with others' attainment.
- **verbal persuasion (and allied types of social influences):** These experiences influence individuals to believe that they have specific capabilities.
- **physiological and affective experiences:** Sometimes referred to as "imaginal experiences," these are experiences in which individuals partly judge their efficacy in terms of perceived strength and vulnerability to dysfunction based on bodily responses.

Bandura (1997) posited that any given influence may affect efficacy through one or more of these modalities. In codifying descriptions of efficacious data sources that occur in participants' narration of critical moments, the study yielded insight into the micro-processes that occurred for some of the study's participants during transformative learning processes. Like Mezirow (2000), Cranton (2016), and Nerstrom (2014), Bandura (1997) asserted that experiences become instructive only through cognitive processing and reflection. This alignment provides additional insight into the alignment between Bandura's work and transformative learning as in each case, "a distinction must be drawn between the information conveyed by experienced events and information as [being] selected, weighted, and integrated (Bandura, 1997, p. 79)" in order for change to occur.

Efficacious Sources and Appraisals

Bandura dedicated the near entirety of his 1997 publication entitled, *Self-Efficacy: The exercise of control,* to an exploration of his theory on the topic in which he identified four sources of efficacy change. What follows is a consideration of each of these sources as offered by Bandura.

Enactive Mastery Experience. Bandura (1997) described enactive mastery experiences as being "the most influential source of efficacy information," providing the "most authentic evidence" (p. 80) of whether an individual will be able to succeed. Enactive Mastery Experiences occur when an individual's judgments of their performance influence their perceived efficacies. Within Bandura's theory, success can be as detrimental as a failure in some instances, just as failure may be as beneficial as success in others. Both success and failure can have many sequences of positive or negative influences on efficacy. Bandura wrote about various possible outcomes for mastery experiences, each with its specific impact. For this study, I distilled these outcomes into four categories:

- **beneficial-success:** when a successful experience builds a robust belief in one's perceived efficacy. This occurs when an individual has generated resilience-efficacy from direct experience in overcoming obstacles and adversity through perseverant efforts.
- **detrimental-success:** when individuals experience easy successes and effectually come to expect success to require only minimum effort. The result is the individuals are easily discouraged by challenges that arise in their next experience and become prone to the acceptance of failure.

- **beneficial-failure:** when the experience of failure provides an opportunity to hone capabilities in order to exercise greater control or skill in other events (including but not limited to a reapproaching of the previously failed task or challenge).
- **detrimental-failure:** when failure undermines an individual's belief that they can succeed. Detrimental-failure tends to occur in instances in which failure happens before a sense of efficacy is firmly established.

The outcomes of enactive mastery experiences are not limited to inhabiting just one of these categories and can often morph between them. In the case of complex tasks, different elements of each classification may simultaneously influence efficacy. Moreover, the categories may correspond to specific and particular components of the experience or the generalized experience.

Linked to a proper understanding of mastery experience is the ability of efficacy gained or lost in one component of an individual's mastery experience to influence an individual's sense of ability toward the entire experience. This transference of generalized or shared efficacy is how individuals can apply resilience-efficacy across experiences. About this transferal of resilience-efficacy, Bandura (1997) wrote, "After people become convinced that they have what it takes to succeed, they persevere in the face of adversity and quickly rebound from setbacks" (80).

Elder and Liker (1982), in their analysis of the Great Depression's enduring impact on Women's lives, provided an example of the transference that occurs with resilience-efficacy. Their sociological study, "Hard times in women's lives: Historical influences across forty years," evidenced that women who weathered economic hardships of the depression were more self-assured and resourceful in later years than their peers who had not experienced hardships.

Moreover, peers who struggled through severe economic hardships during the depression and emerged from it without having had the resources necessary for successful coping were found to have a lesser sense of self-perceived astuteness and displayed a more substantial degree of ineffectualness and resignation than peers who successfully navigated the depression.

Built on the belief that enactive mastery experiences are potent sources of efficacy development, many have sought to harness these experiences' relative influence through guided enactive mastery. Attempts at employing techniques such as strategy modeling, cognitive simulations, and tutorial instruction often have the other sources of efficacy inherently embedded into their design (Bandura et al., 1977; Feltz et al., 1979; Gist, 1989; Gist et al., 1989). Despite evidence that enactive mastery experiences are often the most significant source of efficacy transitions, the remaining sources should not be overlooked, as they are integral influences upon self-efficacy.

Vicarious Experience. Defined earlier as experiences that alter efficacy beliefs through the transmission of competencies from, and in comparison to, the attainment of others—vicarious experiences, mediated through modeled accomplishments or failures, often directly influence efficacy appraisal. While engaging in activities for which there are absolute adequacy measures, such as swimming or flying an aircraft, individuals often operate with a clear sense of personal capability and assess their proficiency and improvement rate by clear personal metrics.

Bandura (1997) asserted that there are no absolute measures of adequacy or metric by which individuals can appraise their capability or proximity to goal achievement for most endeavors. Therefore, individuals naturally referentially compare their efforts, abilities, and accomplishments to others' attainments to appraise their own capabilities and probable outcomes. During these referential assessments, conclusions drawn from these social

comparisons operate as a primary factor in the self-appraisal of efficacy (Festinger, 1954; Goethals & Darley, 1977; Suls & Miller, 1977). Within the domain of vicarious experience, these referential assessments can take on different forms. For some activities, which Bandura refers to as "regular activities" (1997, p. 87), because of the frequency with which these activities occur, standard norms of how well representative groups perform are utilized to assess one's relative standing. The impact of normative comparison on self-appraisal efficacy is well evidenced.

A series of studies conducted by a variety of researchers (Jacobs et al., 1984; Litt, 1988) evidenced that when individuals were provided fictitious feedback about their attainments as relative to the norms of a reference group of similar status, participants' efficacies were heightened by reports of performance superiority and diminished by lower normative standing.

In everyday life, this occurs outside of the boundaries of studies in which a purposeful grouping of selected peers exists. People most often draw normative comparisons between themselves and peers such as colleagues, competitors, friends, or people in other settings engaged in similar endeavors, whom they perceive as having similar circumstances and abilities. Unsurprisingly, perceiving oneself as being outperformed by associates or competitors viewed as similar lowers efficacy beliefs while surpassing others' performance increases efficacy beliefs (Weinberg et al., 1979). Particularly in cases in which individuals are self-selecting the group that they are selecting for normative comparison, the influence on efficacy will vary substantially depending on perceived similarities of circumstance to the observed, particularly in the categories of talent and resource-opportunities (hidden, explicit, and imagined) of those selected for comparison (Bandura & Jourden, 1991; Wood, 1989). Influence shifts with the modification

of these variables happen due to individuals gaining greater familiarity with the resources and abilities of their subjects of comparison.

With individuals frequently engaging in comparative social inference as a diagnostic of their own capability, it is logical that seeing or visualizing the successful performance of others whom an individual views as similar to self typically leads to a rise in efficacy with individuals believing that they possess the capabilities to master comparable activities (Bandura, 1982; Schunk et al., 1987). Conversely, observing others (believed to be of similar competence) fail, despite high efforts and/or a reasonable allotment of resource opportunities, typically lowers an individual's perceived self-efficacy. Furthermore, observation of this type has substantially undermined an individual's efforts at comparable activities (Brown & Inouye, 1978). The degree to which observations of models influence our efficacy directly correlates to the degree to which we see these models as being similar to ourselves (Bandura, 1997).

While vicarious experiences make up an increasing percentage of our experience in the age of social media, with the increase of media and resulting globalization of influences, there are several conditions under which efficacy appraisals are especially sensitive to vicarious information. An individual's uncertainty about their capability is just one factor that impacts how efficacy beliefs are altered. When individuals have limited experience with which to evaluate their capabilities, they rely more heavily on modeled indicators (Takata & Takata, 1976). However, Bandura (1997) cautioned against the belief that "a great deal of prior experience necessarily nullifies the potential influence of social modeling" (p. 87). He wrote that changes in activities, associates, aspirations, and environments bring a unique mix of successes and failures that will result in efficacy reappraisals. Even for individuals having undergone countless experiences of detriment to their efficacy, the modeling of effective coping strategies can

effectively boost an observer's efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Moreover, even those who have high efficacy levels before a vicarious experience can see an increase if they perceive the modeling as having provided them with a better approach despite their established feelings of inadequacy or mastery.

Interdependence. It is important to note that efficacy influences, such as direct experience and vicarious experience, rarely operate independently. In addition to experiencing and assessing the result of their efforts, individuals often simultaneously utilize others' fairing in coming to a complete evaluation of their own competency and ability. With each influencer of efficacy having some degree of effect on others, the strength or weakness of more recent influence occurrences markedly adjust the power of experiences already attained.

While Bandura cited vicarious experiences as being generally weaker than direct experiences, he noted that there are conditions under which vicarious experiences can override or neutralize the impact of direct experience (1997). This adjustment occurred when comparative information obtained through vicarious experiences altered the permanence and impact of conclusions drawn from past experiences by fostering behaviors that confirmed vicariously based understandings. Brown and Inouye (1978) and Weinberg et al., (1979) offered examples of this phenomenon. With the former having studied the role of perceived similarity in competence attainment and the latter having investigated Bandura's (1977) assertion that expectation–performance differences widen due to obstacles and aversive consequences, both sets of researchers came to similar findings. Individuals who observed those they viewed as similar to themselves fail at tasks were prone to accept their own subsequent failures as indicants of shared personal deficiencies. Moreover, in both these studies, it was evidenced that participants were

also prone to behave in ineffectual manners and generate confirmatory behavioral evidence of inability.

***Modeling*.** It is worth noting that the comparative information gained from observations of others' performance outcomes does more than provide a metric to appraise personal capability. There is also evidence (Bandura, 1986) that people actively seek models they perceive as modeling their aspirational competencies. Research shows (Zimmerman & Ringle, 1981) that models who vocalize hope, determination, and perseverance in the face of obstacles before overcoming challenges exponentially influence observers in areas beyond a modeled skill. Bandura (1986, 1997) summarized how this may raise beliefs of personal efficacy by asserting that the "behavior and expressed ways of thinking" displayed by "component models transmit knowledge and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands" (Bandura, 1997, p. 88). Bandura then explained that when perceived inefficacy reflects a skill deficit rather than a misappraisal of possessed skills, models of efficacy offer a high instructive contribution in that they may influence the observer toward greater aspiration and purposeful self-development.

As a result of the strength of model performances and comparative social functions, many learning programs widely manufacture instructive modeling experiences with an emphasis on two naturally occurring factors that we have yet to mention—predictability and controllability—both of which support the enhancement of efficacy beliefs (Bandura et al., 1982).

In demonstrating the component of predictability, models engage with contextual activities to communicate how variables (people, animals, objects, etc.) within a context may react to stimulus. In demonstrating controllability, models are used to communicate strategies for coping with action and reactions within a set context. While both elements constitute what might

be gained, in part, from any vicarious experience, learning programs seek to manufacture these types of experiences focusing on the elements of predictability and controllability to address phobic thinking and gaps in perspective as means of increasing individual efficacy.

Verbal Persuasion. Because evaluations of our talents and capacity often require inferences from indicants, which we have limited knowledge of, it is common to utilize social appraisal to judge our abilities. Within this context, individuals are apt to verbal persuasion regarding their capability to master specific tasks. Of little surprise, individuals may mobilize more significant efforts due to persuasions that indicate that they have the latent or evidenced ability needed for successful performance. Inversely, individuals are prone to cease, undermine, or decrease efforts due to persuasive engagements that communicate their lack of ability. While limited in its power to alone produce enduring increases in perceived efficacy, persuasive attributions may exponentially bolster an individual's belief that they possess the capability to succeed in scenarios in which efficacy appraisals were in process. In these instances, in addition to increasing the degree to which individuals put forth efforts, there is a high likelihood that in cases where persuasive attributions function as catalysts for already budding growth in perceived efficacies, individuals will sustain efforts for extended periods. This phenomenon contrasts with instances in which persuasive attributions cause an undermining of capability and events in which persuasion results in individuals acting on unrealistic personal capability appraisals. In both instances, individuals are likely to find themselves at a lower efficacy. In the former, this happens as a result of the adoption of a defeatist perspective. In the latter occurrence, the enactive mastery experience of detrimental failure discredits the persuader, undermining the individual's efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Feedback as Verbal Persuasion. Two essential features of verbal persuasion are the points of contrast between feedback that communicates a recognition of skill development, which has a minimal impact on self-efficacy, rather than a recognition of "talent" or ability that stands alone in that it is free from the implication that arrival at improvement was the result of hard work (Bandura, 1997). Studies (Schunk, 1982; Schunk & Cox, 1986) evidence that when persuasory feedback communicates improved capability will result from difficult labor, there is an expected rise in perceived efficacy. However, this pales in comparison to the rise in efficacy individuals experience when persuaded that their progress demonstrates an ability or talent for the relevant pursuit without mention of labor. Despite evidence that gains in perceived efficacy from effort attributions are limited in their duration and may be detrimental to long-term skill efficacy, due to an interpretive implication that arduous work points to an individual having limited talent (Schunk & Rice, 1986), effort attributions remain widely touted as an effective strategy for remediation.

Verbal Persuasion and Society. Social customs and biases of providers influence the communication of effort and talent attributions across cultures and societies. Social evaluations of ability and potential are often conveyed indirectly and subtly toward people believed to be of limited aptitude (Bandura, 1997). Masked comments, policies, and/or practices that convey low expectations communicate devaluating biases and reduce recipients' perceived self-efficacy (Lord et al., 1990; Meyer, 1992). Devaluating biases, which can be inherent to an immediate culture, policy set, or individual perspective, can be recognized in the assigning of unchallenging tasks, excessive praise for mediocre performances, a repeated offering of unsolicited help, indifferent treatment for unsatisfactory performance, or a lack of praise for comparatively strong performance.

Similar to other efficacy sources, evaluations of efficacy that result from verbal persuasion are complicated by relevant indicators being imperfect predictors. Verbal persuasion differs from other efficacy sources in that its appraising predictors and indicators are being generated and evaluated by someone other than the performer. To account for issues of imprecision, misalignment, and bias in the selection and evaluation of predictors by others, individuals not only weigh the insights of others in accord with the knowledgeableness and credibility that they perceive their evaluator(s) as possessing, but they often make cumulative considerations of feedback by contextualizing offered insights with those they have received in the past.

Moreover, the extent to which persuasory influences impact an individual may be linked to a capital focus on avoiding potential loss (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). As a result of having lived experiences of traumatic loss, or significant resource insecurity, individuals may view potential future gains as less salient, less notable, and less compelling than current aversive losses. This perspective often results in individuals viewing themselves as more efficacious for a course of action presented as serving a safety function than for gain. Another variable impacting how individuals respond to persuasory influences is whether feedback highlights percent progress toward or away from the desired standard. Across studies (Bandura & Wood, 1989; Jourden, 1991; Wood & Bandura, 1989), it has been found that casting evaluative feedback for the same accomplishment in terms of distance from a goal detracted from a sense of personal efficacy, whereas feedback centered on performance gains enhanced efficacy and subsequent rates of accomplishment. Bandura (1997) asserted that the former is commonly in everyday life's social fabric. This commentary takes on significant meaning when we consider how distance-centered feedback may yield the same result as disparaging criticisms (Baron, 1988)—namely, a

lowering of perceived efficacy and aspiration that may be generalized across different activities for the recipient.

No matter the variable circumstance, the degree to which social appraisals influence an individual's perceived efficacy will depend heavily on the degree of appraisal disparity (Bandura, 1997). The discrepancy between what is communicated about an individual's capability and beliefs will have a marked impact on persuasory efficacy. The optimal level of disparity is dependent on both the temporal proximity of pursuits and the nature of the activity.

Regarding the topic of optimal disparity, Bandura (1997) pointed to the relationship between appraisal disparity and time. Being prone to believe that marked disparities require more extended periods to address, there is a correlation between the temporal distance of a goal outcome and the optimal level of appraisal disparity that indicates the degree to which individuals view applying a social appraisal as plausible. Optimal disparity is a continuum in which assessments of substantial or marked differences are positioned best for future functions. Increases in temporal proximity effectively lower individuals' tolerances for appraisal disparity. This lowered tolerance is due to an individual's need to assess change as possible over the presented duration. Thus, the degree to which disparity may be beneficial to a recipient is relational to temporal distance.

Optimal levels of disparity also vary depending on whether a social appraisal communicates a fundamental skill deficit or an ineffectual use of existing skills. In the latter, an individual reaches performance gains due to being convinced that they can aptly apply a held skill to produce the desired outcome with a modified approach. In the former, a scenario in which requisite skills are lacking, social persuasion cannot stand in the place of skill development. In cases in which performers severely lack needed skills, social appraisals most

effectively raise efficacy when judgments are focused on self-development capability rather than reached or near future timelines for accomplishment.

In addition to offering overarching considerations on the role that knowledge and credibility play in the assessment of appraisal by a recipient, Bandura (1997) was also purposeful in advising readers not to misconstrue "fleeting pep talks" (106) as significant instances of verbal persuasion. Instead, Bandura pointed to significant models in people's lives and highlights that the impact of verbal persuasion upon persuasory efficacy is highest when the appraiser plays a vital role in the appraised individual's life. Parents, coaches, mentors, respected colleagues are prime examples of people who may play critical roles and, as a result, have their appraising of a recipient's capability privileged for deeper and more meaningful consideration.

Physiological and Affective States. Perhaps the most overlooked of all efficacies influencing experiences is that of the physiological and affective states. Human beings rely heavily on somatic indicators and information conveyed by their emotional responses to assess personal efficacy. This statement holds especially true when individuals are involved with functions that offer high physiological input because people often interpret physiological activation during tense or taxing situations as evidence of susceptibility to a high likelihood of dysfunction. Examples of high physiological function include physical endeavors engaged in as an iterative diagnosis to manage stress of an interaction similar to a previously encountered trauma or threat. With high arousal being a commonly self-fulfilling indicator of performance debilitation, people are apt to perceive their preparedness and ability as higher when not beleaguered by aversive arousal. Focusing on stress reactions and accompanying thoughts of ineptitude often rouse people to elevated levels of distress that produce the very calamities they feared.

Bandura's 1988 analyses of the micro-relation between perceived self-efficacy and anxiety arousal found that treatments designed to heighten coping efficacy through purposeful exposure to relevant mastery experiences successfully diminished or eliminated somatic reactions to subjective threats and improved participant performances. This work refutes the theory that physiological indicators of efficacy are limited to involuntary or unconscious responses that cannot be addressed. Physical activities that require strength or stamina produce aches and pain that act as indicants of physical inefficacy. Bandura (1997) noted that the affective influence of these indicants can have widely generalized effects on beliefs of personal efficacy in diverse spheres of functioning. Concerning the existence of an inverse relationship between physical indicants and affective influence, both Bandura (1991) and Cioffi (1991) arrived at the same finding: enhancement of physical ability, reduction of proclivity to the expectation of adverse outcomes, and correction to misinterpretations of bodily states are successful means of improving both skill-specific and generalized perceptions of self-efficacy.

Additional points of relevance from Bandura's (1988) analysis were: (a) the central role that perceived self-efficacy plays in the perception of ability to navigate potential threat, (b) a conceptualization of threat as having a relational property between perceived coping capabilities and potentially hurtful aspects of engagement, and (c) the influential role of perceived control in anxiety and stress reaction (Bandura, 1988). In his 1988 analysis, Bandura built on ideas espoused in his 1986 work, *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory,* by positing two means of managing threat. The first means Bandura offered was *behavioral control*, an approach through which individuals act to forestall, constrict the collective scope of, or otherwise reduce the individualized impact of aversive events. In the second approach, *cognitive control*, individuals operate under the assumption that they can

manage threatening situations should they arise. Bandura noted that while "actual and perceived control are clearly distinguishable at the operational level…there is often substantial variance between perception and actuality" (p. 79).

The variance between perception and actuality is of particular interest to this study. It creates a premise for the understanding that the generation of perceived self-efficacy enables individuals to anticipatorily regulate somatic response and arousal through either form of control. Moreover, Bandura concluded that behavioral control did less to diminish anxiety and resulted in less of an increase to future self-efficacy than cognitive control. This was primarily due to cognitive control being more widely applicable to variations of envisioned or encountered threat during initial phases (as well as post-encounter) with a stronger and documented ability to affect autonomic arousals (Bandura et al., 1988).

People differ in the amount and type of attention they put toward recognizing and dwelling on somatic states and reactions (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Duval & Wicklund, 1972). It stands to reason then that attention and involvement play significant roles in determining the impact that somatic responses have on perceived efficacy, both in the moment and during future appraisals. There are two key ways in which this occurs. For one, as stated previously, an awareness of somatic responses can cause individuals to grow in their feelings of ineptitude, which can lead to diminished performance. Two, in matters that require focused attention, individuals cannot focus outwardly and inwardly simultaneously (Kahneman, 1973). When researching the competition of internal and external information, Pennebaker and Lightner (1980) found that when individuals placed in taxing situations were less absorbed in the activities and events around them, there was an increase in their awareness of their aversive bodily states.

Similar to the other modes of influence, the information conveyed by physiological and affective states is not a complete diagnostic of personal ability. Instead, it informs and shapes perceived self-efficacy through cognitive processing. The auditing of physiological reactions is complex as environmental and evocative events influence how internal states are interpreted and dictate whether reactions should be assigned meaning or perceived as inconsequential. Regarding the self-appraisal of efficacy from arousal cues, Bandura (1986) asserted that knowledge about bodily states is acquired, and in large part acculturated, through social labeling and concretized through experienced events.

Bandura (1997) described somatically arousing experiences as having four significant components: environmental elicitors, internal arousal, expressive reactions, and social labeling. Harris (1989) found that children came to understand the four components as compositions (referred to as emotions) through repeated social linkages, each with differing acceptability and reactions specific to the context and immediate culture. By observing their performance under emotional conditions and others' behaviors in response, children formed beliefs about how emotional arousal affects their efficacy and how others respond to the outward display of emotions. Because most somatic responses can feel broad and ill-organized with so much depending on the learned contextualization of an event, people rely heavily on situational information to determine what they are feeling. Thus, the same visceral reactions that may be interpreted as fear may, in another context, be construed as anger or sorrow (Hunt et al., 1958).

Arousal has a different efficacy meaning for those who generally find it facilitatory than for those who find it debilitating. Hollandsworth et al., (1979) analyzed the effects of text anxiety on cognitive, behavioral and physiological responses and found that high achievers tend to view arousal as an energizing facilitator and low achievers are prone to see it as debilitating.

The process by which individuals make judgments of their arousal is further complicated by the degree to which arousal plays a significant role in assessing personal capability. In this regard, the most common occurrence is that moderate levels of arousal heighten attentiveness and serve as conduits to the proper deployment of skills. In contrast, higher degrees of arousal diminish returns and may inhibit function. In seeking to understand what this diminishment of capacity means for the individual, the higher the requirement for complex analysis and precise execution, the more vulnerable an individual is to impairment by higher and more noticed somatic reactions. As people try to make sense of their physiological responses to particular events and situations, they often vacillate between emotions. Mixed emotional arousals or residual arousals from prior experiences are often misassigned in new situations as individuals search for prominent cues that they can use as indicators of what to feel. So profound is the interpretation of signals in ambiguous situations that individuals will often interpret their somatic responses differently based on others' emotional reactions in the same setting (Mandler, 1975; Schachter & Singer, 1962).

With perception and interpretation of physiological and affective states having more significant diagnostic implications on perceptions of efficacy than the intensity of emotional and physical reactions, experience plays an integral role in an individual's beliefs about how their arousal will affect future performance. However, these theories of how arousal will affect future performance have more to do with memory than one might imagine. With similarities between physiological reactions, individuals rely heavily on other cues to identify and label what they experience.

In recognition of the implications of preexisting efficacy beliefs and their accompanying attentional, interpretive, and memory biases in the processing of somatic information, researchers

have sought a better understanding of how construal biases play a role in interpreting bodily reactions. Notable studies and findings that have informed our understanding of these factors include research done by Ehlers et al. (1988), Salkovskis and Clark (1990), and Westling and Ost (1995).

Ehlers et al., (1988) tested the assumption that bodily change appraisal can induce anxiety by gathering a group of 50 participants. Half the participants suffered panic disorders or agoraphobia with panic attacks, and the other half served as controls. The researchers directed participants to self-rate their anxiety and excitement before taking their heart rate, skin conductance level, and systolic and diastolic blood pressure. All participants received false feedback, leading to their belief that they had experienced an abrupt heart rate increase. Patients who believed that the feedback was accurate showed increases in anxiety and physiological arousal. The results of this study evidenced that when individuals who interpret somatic reactions as signs of panic are influenced to believe that they are exhibiting somatic responses, such as an abrupt rise in heart rate, they often conjure catastrophic outcomes. The findings of this study also evidenced that when individuals are secure in their view that somatic responses are frequently benign—they remain psychologically unperturbed.

Salkovskis and Clark (1990) researched how individuals' interpretations of experienced sensations strongly influenced the affect associated with brief voluntary hyperventilation. Recruiting 40 undergraduates as participants, Salkovskis and Clark tasked participants with completing the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, a bodily symptoms/affect checklist, and asked them to rate the pleasantness/unpleasantness of their hyperventilation experience. Participants in the positive interpretation condition described their hyperventilation as pleasant. In contrast, those in the negative interpretation condition described their experience as

unpleasant. These differences in the two groups' assessment of the hyperventilation experience occurred despite both groups having experienced similar body sensations and not differing in their prior expectations of the experience's affective consequences. The reported intensity of bodily sensations was related to the intensity of affect experienced. This research evidenced that bodily sensations and responses, such as hyperventilation, are interpreted and experienced differently in relation to the spectrum of interpretive biases.

Westling and Ost (1995) researched the efficacy of applied relaxation (AR) and cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) as coping techniques to treat panic disorders. Participants consisted of 38 outpatients who fulfilled the DSM-III-R criteria for panic disorder with no or mild avoidance assessed on independent assessor ratings or self-report scales. Participants were treated individually for 12 weekly sessions and self-reported before treatment, after treatment, and at a 1–year follow-up. In addition to evidencing that both treatments yielded substantial improvements for panic attacks, generalized anxiety, depression, and cognitive misinterpretations, which participants reported as maintained or furthered during follow-up sessions, the researchers found there to be no observable difference between the outcomes of AR and CBT on any measure. Findings of relevance to this study in Westling and Ost's (1995) research included evidence of participants experiencing the same heightened bodily sensations experienced as pleasing or agreeable under a positive construal bias but as aversive under negative construal biases. Evidence suggested causation between the intensity of psychological sensations and the potency of alignment between emotional reactions and interpretative predilections. The researchers concluded that treatments that alter calamitous thinking or support emotional arousal control reduce the impact of negative biases on the interpretation of bodily sensations.

These studies support an understanding that people interpret their bodily states depends partly on which aspect of their physiological activity they observe and which interpretative frames they employ. Adding to this literature is a body of research showing that extensive similarities between autonomic responses can overshadow the minute differences between them (Frankenhuaser, 1975; Levi, 1972; Patkai, 1971; Schwartz et al., 1981).

Because of the limited reliability of our interpretative bias, human beings depend heavily upon identifiable situational determinants. We use situational determinants to inform our interpretation of somatic states through both an activation of memory and inferential analysis of the environment (Sarason, 1975).

Supporting the limitation of somatic response analysis, Pennebaker et al., (1985) and Steptoe and Vögele (1992) found little and highly variable relation between perceived and actual autonomic reactions. Hence, judgments of personal efficacy are more affected by perception than genuine autonomic activation, as supported by Feltz and Albrecht's (1986) findings. Appraisal of the reasons for encountered circumstances, the perception of others' motivations, and the activation of memories of experiences perceived as similar all impact an individual's interpretations of their physiological reactions. When these reactions occur in the contexts of prior mastery experiences, validations of capability compared with others, and appraisals by knowledgeable others, perceptions of somatic indicators can conflict with or support self-assessment in manners that may modify perceptions of efficacy.

This research benefited from participants' interpretations of somatic information and their perceptions of integrating this information with other diagnostic indicators. Moreover, patterns that surfaced across participant experiences generated insight into how participants arrived at self-efficacy perceptions that led to transformative change and desistance. What follows this

section is a review of desistance literature that provides further context for the considerations made throughout this research.

Desistance

Overview and Terminology

The topic of desistance from criminality is by no means a new one. Nonetheless, in the annals of the desistance literature, what does exist is a repeated admittance by its authors that the frameworks and concepts of the fields in which desistance traditionally lives are ill-equipped to provide a cohesive explanation of it. More specifically, the existing research fails to explain the process by which desistance occurs for an individual (Berger et al., 2017; Farrall, 2005; Kazemian, 2007; Laub et al., 1998; LeBel et al., 2008; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011; Wright & Wright, 1992). This inability has long- prevented any expansion of the literature beyond "theoretical speculations" (Laub et al., 1998, p. 1) and has resulted in the literature having "no clear confirming set of findings" (Wright & Wright, 1992, p. 54) for even its most popular perspectives.

In approaching the topic of desistance and the manners in which Transformative Learning theory may provide needed insight and explanation into the occurrence of desistance, there is a need for an establishment for some basic understandings. The first basic understanding necessary for this discussion is the distinction between *disengagement*, *deterrence*, and *desistance* (Decker et al., 2014; Moloney et al., 2009; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011). The literature conceptualizes *disengagement* as the event of de-identification from criminal membership. It includes the process of declining embeddedness in criminal offense and, in some cases, intentional separation from criminal communities (Decker et al., 2014; Moloney et al., 2009; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011; Sweeten et al., 2013). *Deterrence* suggests a short-term or temporary cessation of criminal acts,

usually due to perceived certainty and fear of punishment, but does not indicate a complete behavioral or dispositional termination (Paternoster, 1989). *Desistance* is generally and increasingly defined as both the underlying causal processes toward the termination of criminal activity and the state of having terminated a criminal career or pathway (Laub et al., 1998, p. 1). While it may seem academically appropriate to remove the terms *disengagement* and *deterrence* from this discussion for reasons of precision, the absence of clear distinctions between these terms in earlier scholarship resulted in semantic interchangeability of these terms in desistance literature that make their inclusion necessary (Decker et al., 2014; Moloney et al., 2009; Paternoster, 1989; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011).

The second basic understanding necessary for this discussion is that the dearth of studies on crime desistance (Berger et al., 2017; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011) made the inclusion of adjacent and partial frames necessary for inclusion in this review. Initially appearing in criminology as a variant behavior, rather than a phenomenon in itself, desistance long existed only as a descriptive term. Providing in their seminal text, *Understanding Desistance from Crime,* a comprehensive review of desistance literature's various theories, concepts, and methods, Laub and Sampson (2001) not only articulated the need for a unifying framework of desistance but provide a crucial distinction that was at the core of this research. Considering the comprehensive body literature on desistance, Laub and Sampson (2001) define desistance as the underlying causal *process* by which individuals arrive at having terminated from criminality.

Articulating that there was "relatively little theoretical conceptualization about crime cessation, the various reasons for desistance, and the mechanisms underlying desistance," Laub and Sampson (2001, p. 5) found that studies from decades prior broadly sought to identify predictors of criminality rather than desistance from it. In their 2001 text, Laub and Sampson

categorized the bodies of desistance literature as belonging to five theoretical frameworks; maturation and aging, rational choice, social learning, developmental, and life-course theories. The researchers found that while theories of each framework offer nuanced insights into desistance, "none of the accounts were fully satisfying" (Laub & Sampson, 2001, p. 38), in part because of their inability to account for the process by which participants changed. Adult learning provides hope in this regard.

Adult Learning in Desistance Studies

There are significant occurrences in which researchers have applied adult learning lenses in desistance inquiries. One of the most prominent exists in research that has applied Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1977) to explain desistance (Akers, 1990; Akers & Sellers, 2004). Desistance research in the social learning framework operates under the premise that it coalesces elements of desistance literature's rational choice framework while providing a fuller range of applicability to all crime types and provides more in-depth, more straightforward explanations.

The social learning framework of desistance, in concurrence with Cusson and Pinsonneault's (1986) rational choice study, outlines the pathway to desistance as being an inversion of the path into criminal initiation. Articulating how the social learning framework accounts for desistance, Akers and Sellers (2004) write, "the same learning process in a context of social structure, interaction, and situation produces both conforming and deviant behavior. The difference lies in the direction... [of] the balance of influences on the behavior" (p. 85).

The need to consider influences and the balancing between them as informing behaviors lends itself well to the categorization of desistance as a learning experience. However, the topic of the perception and appraisal of influences, even as summative or multiplicative variables in

desistance outcomes, remains relatively untouched compared to the maturation framework's storied application as an explanation for desistance.

Researchers subscribing to the maturation framework, first introduced by Glueck and Glueck (1945), have long advocated their theory that "the physical and mental changes which enter into the natural process of maturation offer a chief explanation of improvement of conduct with the passing of years" (Glueck & Glueck, 1974, p. 149). The Gluecks' theory of desistance being the result of maturation and aging was developed primarily from conclusions drawn from the first set of findings in what is commonly referred to as the "Glueck Study." The Glueck Study is an ongoing 80–year longitudinal study that runs in tandem with Harvard Medical School's adult development study entitled the *Grant Study*. Together, the respective studies focus on the experiences of two groups of men to identify psychosocial predictors of early aging (with the descendants of participants in this study now being studied). The Grant Study focuses on the experiences of 268 Harvard graduates from the classes of 1939 to 1944, while the Glueck study focuses on 456 men who grew up in the inner city of Boston and corresponded to the Grant group in age. Throughout both studies, participants have been continually evaluated through a combination of questionnaires, information from physicians, and personal interviews, with a maximum of two years between each evaluation. As the Gluecks examined the psychosocial variables and biological processes of their study sample, they developed what would become their maturation framework for desistance based on their interpretation of their participant group's experiences (Glueck & Glueck, 1945).

Supporters of the maturation and aging framework as a primary explanation for desistance posit that desistance occurs with time and that, more specifically, individuals experience a natural "decline in recidivism during the[ir] late twenties and early thirties"

(Glueck & Glueck 1974, p. 175). For supporters of Gluecks' rationales, desistance is normative and expected unless an offender had severe biological and environmental deficits (Glueck & Glueck, 1945). The Glueck's argued that persistent recidivism could be explained by a lack of maturity and asserted that offenders who eventually desisted had experienced delayed or late maturation.

At odds with the maturation framework, the social learning framework rejects the theory of desistance as simply being a maturation process by providing two key constructs to explain the process of desistance. The first is a construct titled differential association (Sutherland, 1939). Differential association theory proposes that the earlier, the longer, the more frequent, and the closer the association of an individual to another person, the higher their degree of impact on an individual's conduct (Akers & Sellers, 2009). From a social learning perspective, the association that occurs early on with others in a close or limited community plays a vital role in shaping one's behavior.

The second construct is that of definitions. Under social learning theory, definitions are individuals' values and attitudes about what are and are not acceptable behaviors. That is, "they are orientations, rationalizations, definitions of the situation, and other evaluative and moral attitudes that define the commission of an act as right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or undesirable, justified or unjustified" (Akers & Sellers, 2004, p. 86).

While some staunch advocates of the maturation framework have dismissed Sutherland's (1939) work, a growing amount of research evidenced the concepts offered in his early work. One such example is Warr's (1993) analysis of data from a U. S. Youth Survey of individuals aged 11 to 21. Warr examined responses from the national sample, which included self-reports of criminal involvement, and found that peer relations (exposure to delinquent

peers, time spent with peers, loyalty to peers) changed dramatically over this age span, following much the same pattern as crime itself. Warr found that when peer influence measures are controlled, the effects of age on self-reported delinquency are insignificant. Warr then extended his 1993 study into a longitudinal study (1998) to examine whether desistance from crime was due to marriage or a reduction in exposure to delinquent peers that resulted from marriage. To ensure variability in both rates of marriage and delinquent behavior, data were drawn from waves 5 and 6, when the respondents were ages fifteen to twenty-one and eighteen to twenty-four, respectively. Warr's research evidenced that marriage led to a dramatic decline in time spent with friends and reduced exposure to delinquent peers. Based on the findings of his 1998 research Warr concluded that his finding that peer relations appear to account for the effect of marriage on desistance provided ample support for the social learning framework and Sutherland's (1939) differential association, with both supporting the debunking of a central tenet of the maturation framework.

In seeking to establish a deeper understanding of the connection between age, differential expectations, and desistance, Shover and Thompson (1992) conducted a reanalysis of data points from a Rand Inmate Survey of 1,469 incarcerated individuals across 12 prisons in Texas, Michigan, and California. Participants in the survey were approximately 27 years of age and had a minimum of two previous felony convictions. Nearly two-thirds of the subjects were non-White. The initial administration of surveys to groups of between 20 and 30 incarcerated individuals inside classroom settings took place in 1979. In addition to questions about past criminal behavior, the survey covered topics related to earnings from legitimate employment and criminal activity and estimates of future criminal and non-criminal activities' risks and rewards. In 1989 Rand researchers then examined state and correctional records for follow-up

data on if and how participants had become recidivists. Based on their reanalysis of the survey data, Shover and Thompson (1992) concluded that "increasing age and past performance in straight and criminal pursuits determine the offender's differential expectations" (1992, p. 92). In linking crime desistance to individuals' perception of legal risk and differential expectations based on appraisals of their prior success at non-criminal pursuits, criminal pursuits, and age, Shover and Thompson, subsequently drew two conclusions. First, that there might be a direct, positive relationship between age and criminal desistance. Second, that there might be an indirect effect of age on desistance, whereby it interacts with past experiences to change one's assessment of risks and rewards associated with crime, subsequently leading to desistance.

The findings of researchers such as Warr (1993, 1998), Shover and Thompson (1992), whose research evidence the validity of the social learning explanation for desistance, by and large, have been the same. Namely, that changes in the probability that individuals will engage in criminal activity or conform to societal norms are correlative to several influences, including how others around them espouse definitions (values and attitudes) favorable or dissenting of criminal behavior and individual appraisals of expected outcomes (Akers, 1990; Akers & Sellers, 2009).

In line with this, most advocates of the social learning framework for desistance align with Aker's conceptualization of the probabilities of crimes and desistance as determined by the balances of influences (Akers & Sellers, 2004, p. 85). Within this conceptualization, there are several variables of influence toward desistance, the greatest of which is the lessening or ceasing of exposure to opportunities to model or observe criminal behaviors. In the case of individuals moving away from criminality, the aforementioned opportunities are replaced by differential associations with individuals or entities whose definitions are in favor of societal

norms and provide differential reinforcement (social and nonsocial) that discourage continued involvement in crime (Akers, 1998; Akers & Sellers, 2004, 2009).

While the social learning theory framework offers a reasonable conclusion that people are influenced toward and away from criminality through exposure to influencers, its literature neither explains nor provides an approach for analyzing specific sources of influence that result in desistance or the appraisals that impact the trajectory of decisions and actions.

Another significant appearance of adult learning in desistance studies came from Berger et al.'s (2017) qualitative analysis of ex-gang members' experiences. While research into desistance, and exponentially the process of desistance, has stalled due to an exhaustion of the frameworks and the absence of a unifying structure, Berger et al.'s research offers hope. During their study, Berger et al.'s interviewed their participant samples of 39 core ex-gang members (with an 80/20 ratio of men and women) from the San Francisco Bay area and Los Angeles about their previous gang life involvement and experience of the desistance process.

While their finding that the most common reason for desistance was a reflection that occurred due to personal or vicarious victimization is enough to support this study's transformative learning focus, there is even more generous support to be found. Berger et al. (2017) observed that what most often led to desistance was unforeseen shock and disorientation resulting from unforeseen violence that impacted themselves or family members. In line with reviewed research within the social learning framework of desistance, Berger et al. also found that a combination of influences informed participants' decision to leave gangs. The researchers disaggregate these influences into push factors such as personal and vicarious victimization, burnout of gang lifestyle, disillusionment by the gang, and pull factors such as parenthood, family responsibilities, religious and cultural awakening. Moreover, participants were found to

share a general pattern of desistance that included five distinct stages (Berger et al., 2017): Triggering, Contemplation, Exploration, Exiting, and Maintenance.

While Berger et al. do not provide a framework for what each of these stages means for an individual's progression toward desistance, they point to a process concurrent with transformative learning (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 2000; Nerstrom, 2014). The researchers acknowledged that a limitation of their study was that their sample was comprised of subjects who participated in gang prevention programs, and as a result, may have had their perceptions influenced in similar ways. Yet, this limitation was relatively benign, if not inconsequential, to the question of whether and how transformative learning occurred for participants in this study. Where the researchers assessed limitations, there is, in fact, an opportunity to gain deeper insights into desistance as a transformative learning process. There is also a bevy of support for the need to determine efficacious sources and how the integration of efficacious information from various sources serve to impact participants appraisals and actions.

Interpretive Summary

Each area of this literature review played a critical role in the evolution and positioning of this research. Starting with transformative learning, this review offered a foundational (Mezirow, 2000) and a newer, modernized, and more comprehensive take on the theory (Cranton, 2016) as well as a means by which transformative learning theory may be better oriented to case-study (Nerstrom, 2014, 2017). Next, it provided consideration of the efficacious sources and appraisals offered in Albert Bandura's (1997) work provided yet another means of considering how supports and hindrances may operate in the transformative learning process.

Next, a review of contemporary desistance studies and an examination of social learning's application as a desistance framework emerged the need for research into the process

of desistance (Akers, 1990; Akers & Sellers, 2004). Moreover, the framework's two primary constructs: differential association (Sutherland, 1939) and definitions (Akers & Sellers, 2004), highlight the value of seeking to understand influence upon the behaviors and reasoning in any discussion of the process desistance. With influence being the direct result of appraisals, the social learning framework's offering of generalized beliefs regarding how influence operates is insufficient. Bandura's efficacy theory (1997) can be reasonably applied and codified for analysis in response to this need.

Lastly, Berger et al.'s (2017) study attests to desistance being a transformative process. In their study of factors associated with the desistance of core gang members and the nature of the process that "formers" had undergone, the closing analysis provides a phasic model of desistance that offered a conceptualization that mirrors elements of all the aforementioned transformative learning models (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 2000; Nerstrom, 2014, 2017). In the case of Berger et al.'s seminal study (2017), it is the researchers themselves who close their text by pointing to a need for research to make further inquiry into "how the desistance process is initiated," and the role played by specific "events" in the process of desistance.

Conceptual Framework

Both Nerstrom's transformative learning model (2014) and Cranton's (2016) influenced the creation of this study's conceptual framework. The model's broad categories support researchers in ensuring that considerations are made through the vantage point of understanding participants' experiences by aggregating themes and disaggregating complex experiences while serving as a guard against confirmation bias. Of equal importance was the framework's applicability toward multiple theories of transformative learning. With Nerstrom's (2014) model having four phases that remain constant throughout much of the literature, I benefited from

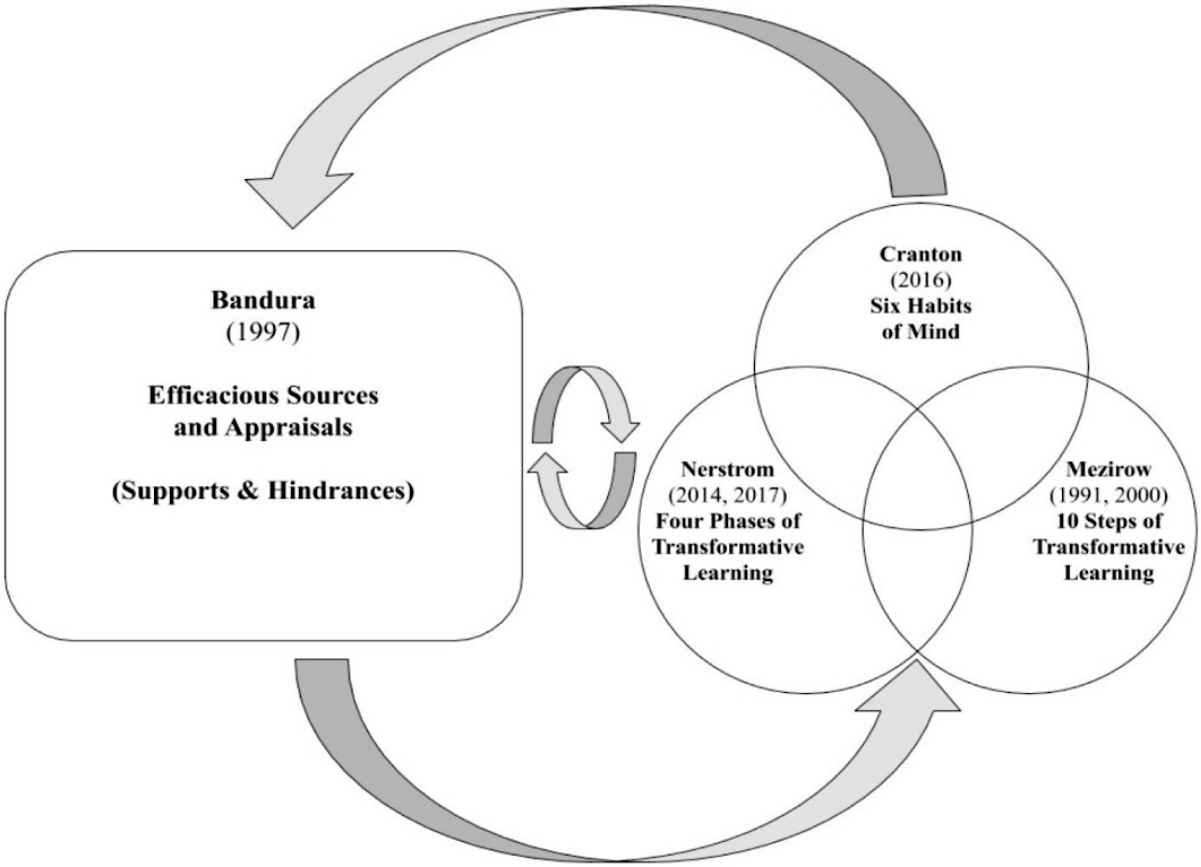
seeing a visual model that offered an integrated conceptualization that acts on the admonitions given by Cranton (2016).

While Nerstrom's integration through broadening is of value in the sense that it encourages making connections across transformative learning theories, the model lacks some of the more telling descriptions offered by Cranton (2016) and Mezirow (2000). For this reason, I chose to include Nerstrom's model to aid considerations of the transformative learning process and experiences expressed by participants but could not commit to applying it as a sole source for the framework. What the conceptual framework of this study looks to represent is visual modeling is that: for each occurrence in transformative learning in which we can identify a connection to one of the referenced theorists (Mezirow, Cranton, Nerstrom), there is a correlating or overlapping event within the theory as presented by one of their peers. Efficacious influences and appraisals may precede the processes and occurrences covered within transformative learning literature, or it can be a subsequent occurrence; thus, an antecedent to further learning.

This conceptual framework, and the choice of the conceptual framework over a theoretical framework, aligns with Imenda's (2014) work, which differentiates between the two types of frameworks. Imenda asserted that a theoretical framework often refers to a theory to guide deductive research and uses an existing theory to explain an event, phenomenon, or research problem. A conceptual framework (Imenda, 2014) differs from a theoretical framework in that it is a synthesizing or integration of related concepts to engage in an inductive process that is aided by the illustration of possible relationships between concepts.

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework for Adult Learning Perspectives on Desistance



CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Chapter

A naturalistic field inquiry with elements of case study, the research focuses on thirty participants' perceptions of their transformative learning experiences. Reviewing the chronology of events of this study, the generation and revision of the literature review was an ongoing and iterative process that occurred over a period of 36 months. The initial pre-interview survey and initial interview protocol were completed approximately 14 months into the construction of the literature review, and it was revised following a pilot study conducted over a 3-month span. With interview participants selected on a rolling basis, as determined eligible based on their pre-interview survey responses, interviews were conducted over a period of eight weeks, and analyzed for over a period of 18 months.

Qualitative data produced by this research made it possible to study the occurrence of transformative learning, efficacious influences, and appraisal in descriptive depth and detail (Patton, 1990). In seeking to understand how participants constructed individual meanings, statistical data produced by a quantitative methodology would be inappropriate, producing an economical but frugal summary at best. In the conducting of this research, I gathered detailed descriptions of experience and perspectives from participants in order to gain insight into, and explanation of, the transformative learning process as it occurred for participants—all of whom have been previously categorized as violent offenders but have desisted from criminality for a minimum of five years.

This chapter commences with the rationale for the study's application of case study elements. What follows is a brief overview of the research sample and the selection criteria. Next is a detailed description of the converging contexts that comprise the case. Then, an outline of

the types of information gathered. Subsequently, the chapter includes descriptions of each of the mechanisms used to collect and analyze data to allow for audibility and adaptation. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the trustworthiness and limitations of the study.

The Choice to Include Elements of Case Study

In undertaking this research, I sought to make a detailed investigation "with a view to providing an analysis of the context and process involved in the phenomenon under study" (Meyer, 2001, p. 329) through the use of case study elements. Supporting this decision are several theorists:

- Yin (2014) stated, "As a research method, the case study is used in many situations, to contribute to our knowledge of individual group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena." (p. 4)
- Underscoring the value of case study, Gerring (2007) described case study as being appropriate in instances when "in-depth knowledge of an individual example is more helpful than fleeting knowledge about a larger number of examples." (p. 1). Gerring wrote that we "gain a better understanding of the whole by focusing on a key part" (p. 1).
- Neuman (2011) wrote about case study as being means of "intensively" investigating "one or a small set of cases," while examining "both details of each case's internal features as well as the surrounding situation..." (p. 42).
- Tellis (1997) told us that in considering surrounding influences, case studies provide a "multi-perspectival analysis . . . [in which] the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the actors, but also of the relevant group of actors and the interaction between them." (p. 2).

As this study's research interest focused on "both uniqueness and commonality" (Stake, 1995, p. 1) between participants' experiences, the study benefited from what Noor described as the case study's paramount advantages. She described case study as enabling the researcher to "gain a holistic view of a certain phenomenon or series of events" and provide a round picture informed by many sources of evidence (Noor, 2008, p. 1603). Meyer asserted that this benefit makes a case study useful in authentically "addressing contemporary phenomena in real-life context" (2001, p. 330).

In connection, this study "give[s] a voice to the powerless and voiceless" (Tellis, 1997, p. 2), as it seeks to "to understand the situation under investigation primarily from the participant's, not the researcher's perspective. This is called the emic or insider's perspective, as opposed to the etic, or outsider's perspective…" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011, p. 9).

In terms of its application and function, the case study's methodology is less structured than many types of research methodologies. It is this flexibility that makes case study elements suitable for the analysis of multidimensional variation with complex interactions, as it allowed for "tailoring [of] the design and data collection procedures to the [specific] research questions" (Meyer, 2001, p. 330) and openness for "the use of theory or conceptual categories that guide[d] the research and analysis of data" (Meyer, 2001, p. 331).

In applying a case study approach to this naturalistic field inquiry, there is an assumption that each adult – albeit influenced by carceral and societal contexts and power dynamics – is a unique individual learner. To this end, individual participants constituted the unit of analysis that defines a "case," with each individual's perceptions having been subsequently synthesized into what is presented as findings and conclusions of this holistic study.

Areas of Information Needed

This study on transformative learning in the desistance of formerly violent offenders posed a unique set of informational needs. The literature belonging to Transformative Learning, Efficacy, and Criminal Desistance provided theoretical underpinnings which contributed to the formation of this study by providing a theoretical foundation for the study and the chosen guiding practices; influencing the construction of research instruments; and being the source of information used in the development of the analytic categories.

The literature review also provided evidence a dearth of information on the process of desistance and a comparatively infinitesimal amount of research that made considerations of the process of desistance from the perspectives of the subjects themselves. The literature review served well in providing the needed theoretical and, to a lesser extent, generalized contextual knowledge for this study; however, I felt a responsibility to gather interpretative (perceptual) information at two critical junctures. The first juncture was situated within the pilot study's undertaking, as interpretative data were needed to come to a greater understanding of how to improve this study's focus, design, and implementation. The second juncture occurred during the implementation and consideration of the study's interviews. During the interviews, perceptual information most directly addressed the questions posed for this research. Ultimately, the data for this research (in agreement with current qualitative research practices) belonged to four distinct, but interrelated, categories:

- theoretical information that was obtained from the literature, which provided an anchoring background for the study;
- demographic information that was used to construct profiles of the participants;
- contextual information that provided information about the participants' social environment; and

- perceptual information that documented how participants perceived subjects that drove the research inquiry.

While there are several ways to categorize needed information, this particular formation honors a critical element of case study methodology in ways that led to a fuller, more robust set of responses to the central inquiries of the study. By incorporating emic perspectives as central pillars for inquiry research, with contextual and perceptual information being crucial and appropriately privileged, I gained critical insight into the transformative learning process as it occurred for participants.

By analyzing first-hand accounts offered by participants, categorized in this study into contextual and perceptual information, I was able to identify how intersecting schemas of efficacious observations and appraisals influenced participants' meaning and decision-making. With a central focus on participant perception, I utilized a combination of research tools, such as an illustrative time line tool, critical incident analysis, open-ended questioning, and inductive exploration, to arrive at a deepened, fuller, and more nuanced understanding of the transformative learning phenomenon. This approach provided insight into the otherwise overlooked intersectionality of integrating perspectives, efficacious observations, and perceptions that comprise and influence the mean-making process of transformative learning (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011, p. 9) and included:

- **theoretical information:** Theoretical information for this study was obtained primarily from a review of the literature belonging to transformative learning, efficacy, and desistance. This literature informed the process of coding, interpretation, and analysis in conducting this research.

- **demographic information:** Demographic information was gathered through the provision of surveys of prospective participants. See the "Pre-Interview Survey" section of Chapter III for additional information.
- **contextual information:** Contextual information was gathered from participant interviews using open questioning, an embedded illustrative timeline tool, and a modified critical incident protocol.
    - The contextual information was also supplemented by referencing literature that documented trends and patterns in participant experiences. This information helped form a nuanced understanding of participants' environment(s) and the manners in which learning was influenced by efficacious observation and appraisals.
- **perceptual information:** Perceptual information included participant descriptions of the ways they learned, their meaning-making process, the conditions of their learning experiences, and their perceptions of how their experiences influenced their knowledge, beliefs, and actions.
    - In the process of interviewing as a means of gathering and analyzing perceptual information, I sought descriptions of: participants' perceptions of the types and modes of learning they perceived as fundamental to their desistance; the role of self-perception and self-assessment in participants' desistance from criminality; why participants perceived critical incidents as being critical, as well as what were the contexts and perceptions connected to each incident; and recommendations participants offer for replication of their

successes and ways to offset barriers to desistance (both support and hindrances).

Research Design

Research for this study began with a review of literature relevant to its topic(s) as a framework for understanding "the importance of the study" (Creswell, 2009, p. 25). Substantial areas of the literature reviewed for this research include Transformative Learning, Efficacy, and Desistance (see Literature Review in Chapter II). The review of these literature bodies was the foundation for the conducting and considerations that guided this research.

The conceptual framework, research questions, literature on methodology, and adjacent studies informed the methodology and sample criteria utilized for this research. After drafting a research proposal for this study, receiving feedback from colleagues in the field of adult learning, defending the completed proposal, and getting approval from the institutional review board to begin research, I conducted a robust pilot study as a means of calibrating the study's approaches and protocols.

With the pilot study having evidenced the points and spirit of the literature upon which the methodology was built, I used social media and listservs as means of generating a pool of participants to complete an online survey designed to determine participant interest and eligibility (while providing an easy means of gathering demographic information of would-be participants). Participants who met the eligibility criteria were able to self-schedule their interview sessions.

The demographic information was not used to hand-select participants, but it did allow a means to determine the degree to which respondents were representative of the current

population of incarcerated individuals in New York State (see Chapter IV). It also fostered a means of organizing data for trends across several demographic categories.

I completed thirty 60–120-minute interviews, which were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. During the interviews, participants used an illustrative timeline tool (the benefit of which was evidenced during the pilot study) to recall critical moments while providing participants with the opportunity to offer detailed descriptions and the researcher ample opportunity for follow-up questions. Throughout the interviews, participants articulated perceptions, contexts, conditions, and influences as they experienced them.

Throughout the research process, I continued to review the literature based on a need for information to address gaps in understanding that emerged during the interviews and to remain abreast of the most recent findings and conclusions of the literature relevant to this research. Upon completion of the data collection phase, the final stages of this research included deductive and inductive coding, done with peer examination strategy (Anfara et al., 2002); analysis and synthesis of the data; and the presentation of findings.

I utilized Atlas.ti as a vehicle for analysis, as it provided the ability to search for codes and themes across interviews. Initial analyses utilized the listening guide strategy (Maxwell & Miller, 2007), which entailed reading interview transcriptions multiple times and discerning different information during each reading. Subsequent analyses utilized coding and thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2012). I generated a strict audit trail by maintaining a memo journal, allowing for reflexivity (Eriksson et al., 2012).

Discussion of the Sample Criteria

Qualitative study design requires information-rich data sources, best arrived at through purposeful, stratified, and criterion-based sampling (Merriam, 2001). About purposeful

sampling, Merriam (2001) asserted that this approach is most appropriate in instances in which "the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61).

Seeking a robust response from as diverse a group of qualified applicants as possible, I employed several means of announcement of this study. I posted paper flyers at libraries, clinics, laundromats, eateries, gymnasiums, universities, shelters, and other high traffic areas in the cities of New York, Poughkeepsie, Ithaca, Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Yonkers, Binghamton, Elmira, Rhinebeck, Ossining, Brockport, and Yonkers. I also posted online flyers via social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, with a target audience of adults ages 22–49 residing in New York State.

In seeking to recruit 30 participants who, within the parameters of this study, met the legal definition of, and self-identified as, formerly violent offenders, I used the following criteria to determine participant eligibility. Participants must:

1. have desisted from criminality, which this study defines as having been free of criminal activity for at least five years;
2. be former recidivists/violent offenders within New York State; more specifically, they must have been a recidivist by way of violent crime after having already served a sentence of at least two years within New York State;
3. self-identify, and be legally recorded, as having been guilty of a class A or B felony;
4. be willing and capable of completing the demographic survey and all components of a 60–120-minute Zoom interview; and
5. be between the ages of 22–49 years old.

In aiming to glean significant learning from as diverse a sample of participants as possible, there was also an intent to select a group of participants representative of populations currently incarcerated in New York State (see Chapter IV). In aiming to gather a diverse sample of participants, there was also a need to bound the study to allow a cross-analysis of trends.

To participate in this study, individuals needed to be between the ages of 22 and 49. The age of 22 was used as a minimum, informed by the research's criteria of desistance as having been free from criminality for at least five years. Individuals 16 years old and older are considered adults in New York State criminal courts. As a result, in defining desistance as being a minimum of five years, the youngest eligible individual to have been tried as an adult, found guilty of a violent offense, and desisted would be, at minimum, 22 years of age.

Participation was limited to those under 50 years of age. This marks the average age at which researchers reclassify individuals as older offenders with needs and experiences unique and separate from those experienced by other adult offenders (Aday & Krabill, 2012; Stojkovic, 2007; Yorston & Taylor, 2006). Applying case study elements to this research, the bounding of participants' eligibility by age and location ensured a sufficient overlap in socio-historical context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mills et al., 2010; Schwandt, 2003).

In reviewing the aforementioned criteria, it is worth noting that there was an underlying assumption in the inclusion of Criterion #2, which inherently decreased the number of eligible participants by requiring that they had previously recidivated. This decision was an effort to identify candidates for participation for whom desistance would mark a more significant shift from previous behaviors and lifestyles.

For an individual with a single instance of criminal violence, their action may be the result of (a) individually uncommon reasoning and/or decision making; (b) extreme circumstance

that the individual is unlikely to encounter again; and/or (c) an only partially adopted worldview that became altered as a result of punishment or guilt. These individuals' desistance may not qualify as authentic desistance since they had no record or evidence of propensity and inclination to act in criminal violence.

In seeking candidates for whom previous incarceration, fear of punishment, guilt, and mandatory programming did not result in successful desistance or deterrence from violent crime, I sought evidence of actions that imply proclivity and inclination to criminal behavior in ways that would require, at minimum, a shift in perspective.

Methods for Assuring Protection of Human Subjects

This was a minimal risk study in which voluntary participants were aware that they could end their participation at any time. In addition to the formal procedures and documents required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which included: mandatory training; a completed IRB application; signed participant rights documents (Appendix A & C); informed consent forms (Appendix A & C), I provided participants with contact information of licensed counselors, support groups, and entities that participants could contact free of charge (Appendix F). If participants desired to seek counseling for any emotions or logic that emerged due to their participation in this research, they could contact any listed resources.

Participants were informed of the estimated time to complete all the study components and data security measures taken throughout the research.

Participants in the interview received digital copies of all materials and had the option of having the packet's content read aloud to them in English or Spanish (the two dominant languages of the sample set of respondents). Before beginning the interview, participants were informed that they could ask questions for clarification or explanation and decline response at

any point during the interview. Participants were assigned randomized computer-generated alpha-numeric pseudonyms for use in their survey and interview. All data has been kept in an encrypted and password-protected file.

Data Collection

There were two methods of data collection used in this study: a pre-interview survey (Appendix B) and an individual interview protocol (Appendix D) with embedded use of an illustrative tool and a critical incident protocol.

Pre-Interview Survey

The pre-interview survey (Appendix B) stated in its introduction that the purpose of this research study was to gain insight into the learning experiences of previously violent offenders. The survey also explained that to assess the distribution of experiences categorically, ensure selected participants meet the study's criteria, and assist in identifying trends of experience, my request was that each applicant complete the survey to the best of their ability.

Included in the survey were questions related to age, race, ethnicity, gender, education, preferred language, location(s) and length(s) of incarceration, number of arrests and corresponding ages, age(s) of incarceration and release(s), reasons for arrests, and whether participants self-identified as guilty or innocent. Besides being utilized as a filter to ensure that the 30 interview participants met the criteria for participation, data collected from the 148 completed surveys served to surface trends among the respondents. Although the guiding research questions did not focus on demographic categories as primary paths for data analysis, demographic information analysis served as one means through which patterns and themes emerged.

Interviews

I utilized an open-ended interview protocol (see Appendix D) for interviews that included an embedded illustrative timeline tool (see Appendix E; discussed below) and critical incident protocol (see Appendix D). In trying to gain an in-depth knowledge of how transformative learning occurred for participants and the influences that impact the efficacy needed for transformation, there was a need for tools that could assist in probing beyond aggregated and abridged statements that individuals often use to compartmentalize longer processes for the sake of brevity. The illustrative tool proved an effective means of garnering detailed descriptions of participants' transformative learning and desistance processes.

Kvale (1996) asserted that knowledge and conversation are intertwined. Using the same logic, I sought to use in-depth interviewing (Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1998) as a primary strategy to gain insight into the process of transformative learning and efficacy attainment as experienced by participants.

Interviewing provides researchers an opportunity to clarify statements, probe for additional insight (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), and capture a person's perspective of an event or experience. Capitalizing on these benefits, I audio-recorded and transcribed interviews to produce verbatim records of participants' articulations. Understanding the need for interviews to be consistent to allow for cross-participant response analysis, I chose to employ a semi-structured approach, allowing for deviation for follow-up, clarification, or deeper questioning that aided in coding and analyzing relevant and connected information across interviews.

Embedded Interview Tools

Discussion of the Illustrative Timeline Tool. The illustrative tool (Appendix E) worked to foster conversations rooted in participants' experiences. Using this tool, participants created a timeline from their life events while making visual indications at occurrences of significance or

meaning attached to highlighted events (Berends, 2011; Patterson et al., 2012). The tool facilitated richer and more detailed descriptions by operating as a memory aid for participants and a tool for probing critical incidents represented in the high and low points graphed on the timeline.

Kolar et al., (2015) write of this type of timeline mapping as being an ideal for the informing of verbal semi-structured interviews as it (a) builds rapport between researcher and participant; (b) positions the participant as navigator; and (c) enhances the contextualization of narratives.

Additionally, while the use of the illustrative timeline served participants in plotting momentous events, it also, in many cases, allowed participants to graphically represent what may have been more gradual, cumulative, changes in the disposition toward their ability to change.

From this point, through careful use of the critical incident protocol and other probing questions, I gathered detailed descriptions of the occurrence or absence of transformative phases, shifts in perceived efficacy, efficacious sources and appraisal and the integration of efficacious data into thinking and action.

Discussion of the Critical Incident Protocol. Utilized as a reliable data collection method since first developed by Flannigan in 1954 (Brookfield, 1990b), the critical incident technique is a relied means by which to extract elements of critical significance from human experience.

Brookfield (1990b) has written extensively on utilizing the critical incident technique to facilitate critical reflection and emerging deeply embedded assumptions. As a means of probing learners' assumptive worlds, the critical incident technique facilitates the production of descriptive accounts of significant learning experiences referred to as critical incidents

(Brookfield, 1990b). These incidents, often resulting in realizations or reevaluation, result in significant contributions that move individuals toward or away from an activity or phenomenon. In this study, the activities and phenomenon I sought an emic perspective of the influences and processes by which participants experienced transformative learning.

Writing on what he considers to be a successful application of the critical incident protocol, Brookfield (1990b) wrote:

> The purpose is to enter another's frame of reference so that that person's structures of understanding and interpretative filters can be experienced and understood by the educator, or a peer, as closely as possible to the way they experienced and understood by the learner. (p. 180)

The decision to embed critical incident questioning as part of the interview came principally from a review of this research's purpose and inquiry. In seeking to elicit detailed descriptions of the process by which learning experiences resulted in desistance, through an inductive approach, the critical incident protocol provides a vehicle toward the generation of these descriptions while also furnishing a touchstone from which to align the descriptions provided by respondents.

Because of this alignment, analysis of critical incidents emerged etically evidenced theories of correlation while providing emic insight and descriptions of process and causation elements. While critical incidents often exist as part of a participant writing protocol that is separate and supplemental to oral interviews, in pilot studies with the target population, participants expressed discomfort when asked to provide critical incidents in writing, citing that the amount of description they wished to include made writing feel like an excessive task.

When critical incident responses were compared to those gathered through oration during interviews conducted as part of a pilot study, spoken responses were conceptually more robust. On average, respondents provided 906 more words during oration (before being asked follow-up

questions). Throughout the study, participant descriptions operated as the primary source of evidence for this study (Yin, 2014), with an embedded assumption that participant perspectives would be "meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 2001, p. 348). These factors made it so that the degree to which the protocol successfully elicited and facilitated the exploration of moments that participants saw as significant to their learning experiences and the process of desistance would be, by design, a significant determiner of the study's success. For this reason, questions about critical incidents were semi-structured to maintain consistency while allowing me to elicit more information by prompting individual participants to articulate their experience through intersecting descriptions of their thought processes, appraisals, physical reception and responses, and any interpretations that may have otherwise been overlooked or omitted. Questions and prompts that inquired about sensory experiences were of use in creating an explicit opportunity for participants to describe and surface what they perceived as connections between interpretations of physiological interpretation, their prioritization of responses, courses of action, and any reflective conclusions they may have drawn. The interviews were made more conversational using questions and prompts to encourage participants to offer descriptions that extended beyond common reportage meant to be visually illustrative toward sensory and cognitive experience descriptions. This conversational flow of dialogue, especially during the recounting of critical incidents, led to an increase in depth and detail (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), resulting in richer and more valuable data.

An additional strength of the embedment of the critical incident protocol, evidenced throughout the pilot study and supported by Brookfield's (1987) work on the utilization of critical incidents, was the opportunity for the corroboration of responses from other interview questions. Despite a shortcoming of the critical incident technique being its reliance on

respondents' recollection, as participants may forget details of events over time (Serenko & Stach, 2009), it is well-established as a reliable method (Andersson & Nilsson, 1964) for "the collection, analysis, and interpretation of reports of actions" (Serenko & Stach, 2009, p. 30).

Data Analysis and Synthesis

In seeking to gain insight into how participants' experiences, appraisals, and integrations of data converge to result in transformative learning and desistance, the methods of data analysis chosen for this study differ from adjacent studies. While this is primarily due to its application of adult learning theory, there is also a sharp difference in approach. My commitment to conduct this study in a manner in which the emic understandings of participants are principal informants of what is to be gleaned about the desistance process (Peshkin, 1993) differs from much of the existing literature in that it offers insights that are based only on etic assumptions (Laub et al., 1998).

Anfara et al., (2002) state that "the purpose of analysis is to bring meaning, structure, and order to data" (p. 31). With analysis being a recursive process, requiring a constant recalibration of collection, interpretation, and dissemination methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), and the tools of this study designed to yield clusters of information-rich data, it is necessary to include in this section how the gathering, synthesis, and analysis of data occurred.

Interviews were audio-recorded, and the process of analyzing collected data began with the transcription of all interviews. Interviews were read as a collective set utilizing the listening guide strategy (Maxwell & Miller, 2007), which entails reading interview transcriptions multiple times and discerning different information during each reading. In line with Saldaña's (2012) assertion that coding of qualitative analysis requires that a word, phrase, or symbol be used to symbolically assign notation of "summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or

evocative attribute[s]" (p. 4), the coding for this study began with a literature-based coding intended to communicate agreement, disagreement, or absence of the concepts present in the reviewed literature. Next was creating demographic codes that corresponded to the demographic information that participants supplied during their interviews. This early groundwork, in which literature-based and demographic codes were generated, was integral to the success of the coding process as it would allow for me to quickly identify overlap later between participants' descriptions of occurrences, inter-alignment of concepts across literatures, and patterns across key demographic attributes. Literature-based coding was divided into two main categories:

1. Transformative learning included subcategories that reflected the conceptual application of the work of Mezirow (2000), Cranton (2016), and Nerstrom (2014, 2017).
2. Efficacious sources and appraisals included subcategories that reflected Bandura's (1986, 1997) theories on efficacious sources, appraisals, and outcomes.

Once the first iteration of the literature-based and demographic codes was completed and checked for alignment to the literature review, conceptual framework, and research questions, they were set aside to make room for pattern-based coding development. The first pattern codes were generated by listening to the audio recording while reading transcripts generated by audio submission to reputable transcription services. This allowed for the capturing and connecting of descriptive attributes and occurrences in participant responses. During this early stage of the coding process, I annotated transcripts to reflect any elements that might have been lost by considering the transcripts alone (such as the tone of voice or emphasis on a particular idea). Next, several methods of code generation and coding were applied to

develop a participant-based coding schema. The first method was structural coding, which entailed using phrases to represent a topic of inquiry for use in linking segments of data" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 97) to both codes and categorizations. These structural codes were applied to segments of data corresponding to categories stemming from the research questions and the conceptual framework. Next, as a means of categorizing participants' beliefs about what enabled or hindered their learning, I utilized value coding, which applies codes based on "a participant's values, attitudes and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 131). Next, process coding was undertaken with gerunds or gerund phrases to capture actions in ways that later supported the analysis of participants' descriptions of processes and learning trajectories. The initial coding schema (participant-based, see Appendix G) and the literature-based coding (See Appendix G) were then refined based on data that emerged from each review of the interviews, sorted into themes, and continually consulted as reciprocal informants through the next coding steps. In this way, the literature review and resulting conceptual framework became embedded into coding considerations as a support, without running the risk of stumbling into a deductive approach. This early integrative list of codes operated as a repository for collected data that served as the basis for revising various iterations of the participant-based coding scheme moving forward (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Throughout the early processes of establishing codes and coding, I relied heavily on the expertise of five university-tenured colleagues, all of whom held expertise in qualitative coding and a record of peer-reviewed publication. Dialogue with these five colleagues was assistive in refining the initial codes and addressing preconceptions that may have erroneously influenced initial steps.

Next, the use of an open-coding procedure that integrated code families allowed for immersion into the data across interviews (Saldaña, 2012, p. 236) in ways that supported and encouraged the identification of emergent themes, configurations, and explanation, while increasing researcher and evaluator familiarity across the data set (Stake, 1995). In subsequent rounds of reading and analyses, I refined pattern codes through the addition of sub and adjacent codes that further reflected the nuance and differentiations articulated by participants as well as unique instances and linkages between occurrences based on transcripts and descriptions that made up the collective data set (Stake, 1995). Next, the refined codes were used to engage in a thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2012) in which similar codes or trends across the aggregate data could be collapsed into significant themes or findings (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), and assigned them summative attributes (Saldaña, 2012). Once summative attributes were assigned, modification of Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software, allowed for the conditional formatting of Boolean operators (and, or, not, quotation marks, and parentheses). This modification allowed for the creation of Boolean expressions and a categorizing of processes, descriptions, and outcomes that aided the tracking of emergent data and resulted in a richly descriptive final coding scheme organized that in turn surfaced primary findings.

The next step in the analysis was a shift in focus toward the individual interviews. Theoretical memos (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) documented my growing understanding of participants' individual experiences, lines of evidence for understanding, and instances of efficacious influencing, appraisals, and perspective shifts.

Maxwell and Miller's (2007) listening guide strategy was applied throughout the analysis and re-coding of individual interviews. Based on what emerged, I revised the coding scheme to

further conditionals to simultaneously observe broad similarities and nuanced differences in experience and rationale.

After multiple cycles of refinement in which seeming incongruencies caused by broad categorizations were resolved through the assignment of hierarchical values and narrowing descriptors, I returned to each of the individual transcripts (and adjoining illustrative timelines), paired down coding by relevance, and looked holistically at participants' experiences through the lens of newly emerged insights. At this stage, a tentative findings document was drafted and then continually refined throughout the remainder of the data analysis process (consisting of cross-case analysis and factoring demographics in examining patterns and trends).

Next, Atlas.ti was used to explore demographic matrices and re-examine identified linkage trends and patterns between interviews. Transcripts were then re-analyzed for discrepancies or lingering questions and reshared with five colleagues with formal expertise in qualitative coding. Each of the colleagues attended a shared Zoom meeting. They discussed the coding, posed questions for consideration, and came to a consensus on adjustments that could be made to ensure that the codes were readily distinguishable from one another in ways that would generate more explicit understandings during later analysis. The resulting final code list (Matrix H) and an accompanying Matrices that include commentors for each of the codes can be seen in Appendices J through R.

A working draft of the dissertation that included research findings, interpretations of findings, analysis and recommendations were then shared with 3 of the participants to engage in member–checking of my interpretations and analysis. Each the 3 participants attested that they felt representations and interpretations through the paper were accurate to both their experience and what they wished to convey in their interviews. Additionally, each of the participants

described the emergent model of desistance offered in this dissertation as being accurate to their experiences and those of their peers.

A strict audit trail was kept by developing and maintaining a memo journal, allowing for reflexivity (Eriksson et al., 2012) that informed the recursive analysis processes and synthesis of the data generated by this research (Fairclough, 1992). This memo–journal was one of the documents continually shared with the five aforementioned colleagues for consideration. Each colleague reviewed and commented on the coding and interpretations two more times to establish consensus on the coding scheme's relevance to the topic of inquiry, the appropriateness of the coding to the methodology, and the execution of the coding.

Analysis of the data generated through participant interviews illuminated patterns of trials, challenges, and successes that worked to contextualize the insights drawn from participants' articulations. The integration of demographic data also surfaced individual patterns of occurrences and experiences that permeated and persisted across subcategories of the more extensive data set.

Trustworthiness

With original conceptions of validity stemming from traditional positivist approaches in which researchers were primarily concerned with truth in the accuracy of instruments and their use (Scheurich, 1997), the concept of validity has taken on nuanced revision within qualitative research.

Qualitative studies are framed by a constructivist theoretical stance that assumes that participants and researchers construct multiple truths. Thus, this research's stance provides a reason for a well-purposed deviation from the term ***validity.*** It may have been inappropriate and unsuitable to apply the traditional validity criteria to this study as it centers on finding insight

across constructed truths and does not utilize the traditional instrumentation of positivist and quantitative researchers.

Instead, better tailored to this study is the concept of trustworthiness (Lather, 1986). About the same matter, Marshall and Rossman assert that in instances such as this study, where the researcher is the instrument, "we distinguish the traits that make us personally 'credible' and ensure that our interpretations of the data are 'trustworthy'" (2016, p. 323).

The term trustworthiness signals an appraisal of data collection methods, data analysis, and interpretation in place of the term and criteria of validity which can be misconstrued or misapplied as a means of appraising the data itself. The latter would be potentially problematic as the data is representative of participants' truths.

In line with the choice to use the terms trustworthiness as a means of calibrating toward an appraisal of researcher interpretation rather than of participant explication, participants were, by design, asked to revisit, clarify, and expound on their responses to aid the researcher in making trustworthy interpretations.

Dependability (Reliability)

Much in the way that trustworthiness is a form of validity appropriate to this proposed study's purpose and design, the construct of *reliability* finds its application to this study in the form of *dependability* (Anfara et al., 2002).

Bitsch (2005) explained dependability as referring to "the stability of findings over time" (p. 86). Tied to this was a need to ensure that the coding schemes and analyses were not individually subjective but instead reflected a conscious negotiation and purposeful representation of what authentically occurred for participants.

To meet the need for dependability, I kept an organized audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This audit trail included memos that documented changes in procedures and design, the process of data analysis, and the revision of coding schemes. As a result, there is a record of the inquiry process and how data was collected, recorded, and analyzed; and data supporting the development, wording, and illustration of particular codes and themes are traceable.

Peer Examination Strategy (Inter-Rater Reliability)

I chose to replace the term *inter-rater reliability,* which carries an expectation of raters determining data validity. Instead, I employed the term *peer examination strategy* (Anfara et al., 2002) to describe the process by which five other researchers familiar with this research, the theoretical framework, and the context of the study, were consulted regarding the dependability of the data, coding schemes, and analyses throughout the process of this research. Prior to having participated in two collectively shared discussions via Zoom for 90 minutes, each of the five colleagues had the benefit of accessing the researcher's memo journal, literature review, conceptual framework, and coding schemes. Each of the individuals who participated as peer examiners were scholars with experience in conducting qualitive research.

The first peer examiner has conducted research on topics of migration, ethnicity, and inequality; published in several peer-reviewed journals; and serves as a tenured sociology professor at Trinity College (Dublin). The second peer examiner holds a doctorate from Columbia University, Teachers College and has a history of publications focusing on education policy in urban communities, school reform, and education justice. In addition to being tenured faculty at the Bank Street College of Education, the second reviewer served several years as the director of Bank Street's Leadership for Educational Change program. The third examiner holds a doctorate in criminology and has published in peer-reviewed journals on matters relating to

mass incarceration, criminal recidivism, and criminal psychology. The fourth examiner holds a doctorate in clinical psychology, serves as tenured faculty at the CUNY Graduate Center and has published on topics related to efficacy, adult development, and intersectionality. The fifth examiner holds a doctorate in applied developmental psychology and has published several books on human development in the context of race, ethnicity, and culture. Each of the five peer examiners coded two partial transcripts of 8 pages each using the researcher's coding scheme (excerpt of coded transcript provided in appendix J).

The audit trail I kept proved of particular use during and after the peer examination sessions as it allowed for in-depth views of thought patterns and the logic of coding decisions while also allowing for the recording of instances of differences and their reconciliation in ways that aided the analysis portion of this research.

Credibility and Multiple Source Method (Triangulation)

Two key strategies I employed to supplement this study's trustworthiness were prolonged engagement and multiple source method (triangulation). This study occurred over several months to ensure that study was performed over a long enough period to obtain and adequately consider the experiences and perspectives offered by participants.

Shifting away from the term triangulation because of how truth is defined in association with the term, I instead refer to *multiple source methods* (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) as the means by which I gathered a more complete and detailed rendering of the individual and collective truths expressed by participants. Yin (2009) posited that alignment between multiple perspectives leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Within the context of this study, multiple source method supported me in accessing "several lines of sight" that helped "obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality: a richer, more

complex array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements" (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 6). The multiple sources utilized in this study included the first-hand accounts and descriptions offered by participants during individual interviews, the expertise and perspectives of five individuals familiar with the process of qualitative research and the topics, conceptual framework, and coding of this study, demographic survey data provided by each of the interview participants before their interview, and member checking with three of the study's participants.

The addition of member checking was done to assess the credibility of the findings and interpretations from the participants' points of view. Though each of the participants were invited to participate in a review of my preliminary analysis, only three participants accepted the invitation. Participants 3, 6, and 12 met with me individually via zoom for 60 minutes. A working draft of the dissertation that included research findings, interpretations of findings, analysis, and recommendations was provided to each of the member-checking participants. Each of the three participants offered their perspectives and provided feedback on the accuracy of interpretations while also offering points for further consideration.

In addition to having benefited from the perspectives of researchers external to this study and internal participants, this research was also served by the number of participants (30) in the realizing of their existence as multiple sources. This realization of the sample as multiple sources was accomplished through in session prompts for clarity, the application of a critical incident protocol, the utilization of cross-case analysis, and the coding of recurring thematic elements that established the credibility of emerging and interpretive data (Schwandt, 2003).

Confirmability

Concerned with evidencing that research findings are derived from the data and not the figments of my hopes or imagination (Tobin & Begley, 2004), the aforementioned practices of keeping an audit-trail, peer examination strategy, and multiple source method allowed me to guard against confirmation bias and misinterpretation. Each practice allowed for purposeful reflection on the study's events while allowing for critique and input from others familiar with this research's goals, methods, and limitations.

Limitations of the Research

Despite efforts made to address the study's limitations proactively, I acknowledge that many limitations can be minimized but not eradicated. The first potential limitation of this proposed study is the skew of the participant sample. Carceral experiences vary between municipalities. Many public and private prisons run without a unifying logistic, protocol, or penalty code, with available support and release conditions being specific to their localized governance and policies. Thus, a volunteer sampling of individuals whose experiences are limited to and randomized across institutions in New York State may limit the generalizability of many aspects of this study and its findings. With the intent of this study, however, being to gain insight into the process of transformative learning toward desistance and the role of efficacious influences in the process, the methodological design of this research allows for a degree of "face generalizability" (Singer, as cited in Maxwell, 2005)—or the development of a conceptually oriented theory of desistance as a transformative learning process.

Another possible limitation of this study, like all qualitative research, is susceptibility to researcher bias and subjectivity. What is more, in using interviews as a primary data collection tool, the data gathered for this research is unavoidably conjectural as it relies on the memories and perceptions of individuals and the researcher's interpretations of participant expressions.

Despite the presence of bias due to this conjecturing, Guba and Lincoln (1998) assert that research seeking an understanding of constructed knowledge and transformational learning processes and the experiences and perceptions of participants rests in the qualitative post-positivist method.

To minimize bias, I utilized Marshall and Rossman's (2011) reflexive questions protocol and searched for discrepant data while remaining open to contrary findings (Yin, 2009). I also reported contrary findings to colleagues (Yin, 2009) and recruited their participation in the coding process to minimize the influence of researcher bias.

Another possible limitation is that participants may offer what they perceive to be desired responses. This kind of participant reactivity (Maxwell, 2005) may result in participants making efforts to assist me by crafting responses that they consider helpful to the study. Conversely, another outcome may be that respondents may offer reluctance toward sharing experiences and perceptions that emerge troubling or disturbing emotions or memories. In cognizance of my own bias and the manners in which I may have unintentionally influenced the responses of the interviewees toward either of these occurrences through my body language, gestures, and other verbal cues, I documented my thoughts and occurrences in a reflexive journal as a tool for reflection and refinement toward addressing and reducing both personal bias and the possibility of unconsciously influencing of participants.

A limitation of this study rests heavily in the unique intersection and confluence of a dissonant political climate and the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. With civil unrest rising due to increasing polarization on police violence, immigration, white supremacy, foreign policy, and the role of government, gathering participants became exponentially difficult. Subjects who agreed to participate in the study cited reasons for hesitation to include: distrust of

the university and as a result of any its representatives or affiliates (NC = 17)[1]; exhaustion and/or depression brought as a result of race relations in the United States (NC = 25); and lack of access to technology and/or internet (NC = 15). Social and political tensions were coupled with a widening of inequities caused by a pandemic that disproportionately impacted communities of color throughout the United States. This required that participants navigate additional challenges and barriers to participation, including social distancing requirements, travel bans, and increased difficulty accessing and affording technological resources (including internet-capable devices and internet access). With this in mind, it is feasible that a large number of would-be participants were left unable to access the initial survey, lacked the access and resources necessary to engage in prolonged participation, or were uncertain about their ability to commit to the interview portion of the research due to insecurity about the necessary resources. Other challenges that could have arisen include distrust of the researcher, distrust of the researcher's sponsoring institution, and/or a lack of desire or emotional bandwidth to discuss sensitive topics with a researcher with whom they were unfamiliar.

[1] NC is used throughout this dissertation as abbreviation for Number of Commentors and is meant to indicate the number of interviewed participants commenting out of the sample of 30 participants.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH SAMPLE AND SETTING

A Contextual Overview of the Participants

The purpose of this research was to gain insight into desistance-related learning experiences of participants. With a desire to surface trends from this participant sample through methods that offer a degree of "face generalizability" (Maxwell, 2005), done in hopes that gleaned insights may support the desistance of others. This overview serves three critical purposes in its provision of demographic data and its narrative of context.

1. It allows for the tracking of critical considerations and research occurrences that resulted in the participant sample. Included in this consideration are the manners in which the participant sample is statistically representative of the larger population of individuals currently incarcerated in New York State.
2. It permits a formal provision of surfaced trends that proved essential to realizing and articulating this research's findings.
3. It provides an entry point for further considerations and future analysis of the gathered data.

This chapter begins with a restatement of how the participant sample was gathered. Next, as each participant represented a unit of analysis for this study, there is a comparative table of how these units of analysis are collectively representative of the New York State Prison population. Following this is a limited disaggregation of participants' demographic data that allows the reader to conceptualize participants through a presentation of contextual trends, while maintaining participants' anonymity. Additionally, participants are referred to throughout this study by randomly assigned pseudonyms because some information shared during the interviews

is only otherwise recorded in sealed records. There is no uniquely identifiable information tied to participants in the presentation of this research.

The Gathering of Participants

With a large number of respondents not having reliable home access to the Internet or the necessary Internet-ready devices to participate, and other would-be participants feeling burnout as a result of resource insecurity exacerbated by civil unrest in the United States and the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of willing interview participants dwindled to 28 (two short of the desired 30). After a reposting of the survey to social media (Facebook), two more respondents volunteered to participate in the interview portion of this study.

Thus, there was a skewing of participants in two distinct ways. Due to travel restrictions and the inability to gather in social spaces (such as libraries or universities) due to the 2020–2021 COVID-19 pandemic, it became necessary to conduct interviews via online platforms (e.g., Zoom, DUO, GoogleMeet). As a result, in addition to meeting the study's criteria, participants needed reliable access to an Internet-enabled device and reliable Internet service to participate in the study.

The second skewing was from what I held as an ideal representation of demographics. There being precisely 30 participants who volunteered, there was no opportunity to select a more purposeful sampling. Nevertheless, the demographic representation of participants mirrored some elements of the sought-after representation intended for this study. As shown in Table 1, the race/ethnicity demographics of interview participants are more closely aligned to the demographic distribution of the 2020 NYS Prison Population than demographics of the survey participants. The skewing of the survey data may be illustrative of the lack of access discussed earlier as a limitation of the study.

Table 1

Study Demographics by Race/Ethnicity

	NYS Prison Population	Survey Participants		Interview Participants	
Race/Ethnicity	%	*n*	%	NC	%
Black	46.20	29	19.59	14	46.60
Hispanic/Latinx	33.40	54	36.49	10	33.33
White	20.20	61	41.22	5	16.67
Asian	< 0.01	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other/Unknown	< 0.01	4	2.70	1	3.33

Note. N = 178 participants (*n* = 148 survey participants, NC = 30 interview participants).

Table 2 depicts three statistically significant occurrences. The first is that women make up a comparably smaller portion of New York's State population of incarcerated individuals (4.6%). Second, only 2.7% of survey respondents (4 out of 148 individuals) were women. Third, 0% of women responding to the survey chose to participate in the study's interview portion, while 18.27% of men who completed the survey chose to participate in the interview.

Table 2

Study Demographics by Sex

	NYS Prison Population	Survey Participants		Interview Participants	
Gender	%	*n*	%	NC	%
Female	4.6	4	2.7	0	0
Male	95.4	144	97.3	30	100

Note. N = 178 participants (*n* = 148 survey participants, NC = 30 interview participants).

As shown in Table 3, the ineligibility of individuals under 22 and above 49 years of age for this study resulted in 19.92% of New York State's adult prison population not being represented by the study sample's age distribution. The omission of ages outside of this bracket ensured overlap in ages, eras of governance and policy occurrence, and other socio-historic variables in manners that allowed the emergence of trends and findings through the use of cross-case analysis.

Table 3

Study Demographics by Age

	NYS Prison Population	Survey Participants		Interview Participants	
Age	%	*n*	%	NC	%
< 22	4.90	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
22–29	23.02	49	33.11	10	33.33
30–39	35.04	65	43.92	14	46.67
40–49	24.02	34	22.97	6	20
50+	13.02	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note. N = 178 participants (*n* = 148 survey participants, NC = 30 interview participants).

Table 4 displays a disaggregated view of the survey data provided by interview participants (see also Appendix I). Despite the criteria set for inclusion in the study, the sample's responses to the demographic questionnaire provided evidence of a wide range of experiences and histories among participants. Data represented in Table 4 was critical to developing a contextually nuanced understanding of the participant sample.

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Table 4

Disaggregation of Interview Participants' Survey Data

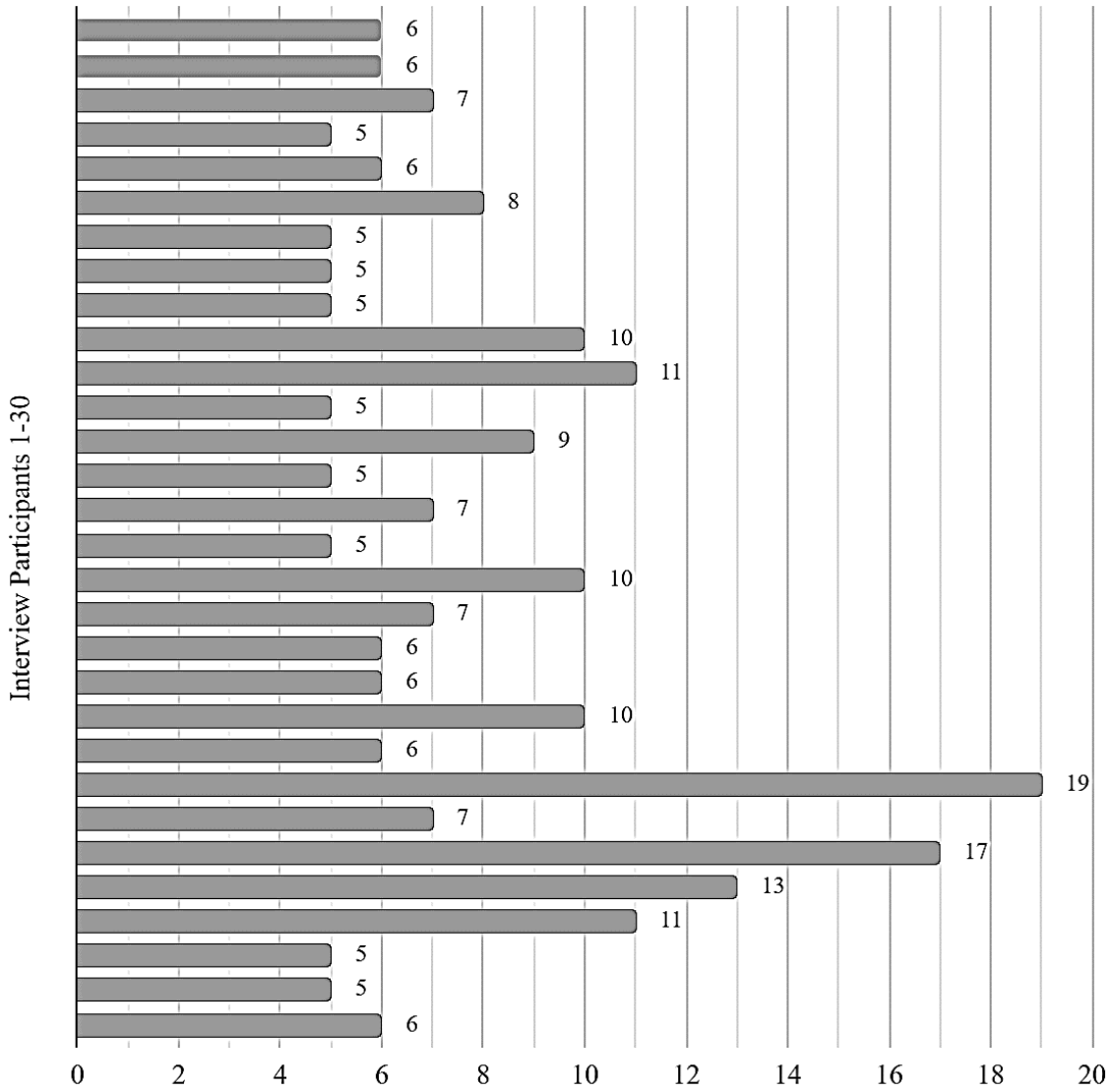
IP#	Name	Age	R/E	S/G	EL	RP	PL	IL	AI	<18	<10	10–12	13–17	18–22	23–27	27–30	>30	LI	LC
1	Alex	25	B	M/M	HS	C	E	3	19	Y	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	6	19
2	Brian	26	B	M/M	< HS	M	E	2	19	Y	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	6	20
3	Caleb	26	H/L	M/M	< HS	NR	E	1	20	N	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	7	19
4	Cassius	26	B	M/M	HS	N/A	E	2	19	Y	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	5	21
5	Caesar	27	B	M/NB	< HS	NR	E	4	21	Y	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	6	21
6	Christopher	28	H/L	M/M	< HS	N/A	E	3	22	Y	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	8	20
7	Daniel	28	H/L	M/M	HS	NR	E	5	23	Y	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	5	23
8	David	28	B	M/M	M	NR	E	4	22	N	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	23
9	Elijah	28	W	M/M	HS	M	E	<1	23	Y	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	23
10	Frederick	29	H/L	M/M	M	N/A	S	1	20	N	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	10	19
11	Gilbert	32	O-I	M/NB	M	NR	E	1	22	Y	1	0	6	3	0	0	0	11	21
12	Henry	33	H/L	M/M	D	NR	E	6	19	Y	0	0	3	5	0	0	0	5	28
13	Israel	33	B	M/M	HS	C	E	6	22	N	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	9	24
14	James	33	B	M/M	< HS	NR	E	3	25	N	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	5	28
15	Louis	33	B	M/M	M	NR	E	2	23	Y	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	7	26
16	Mark	33	B	M/M	HS	NR	E	7	20	Y	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	5	28
17	Michael	36	H/L	M/M	B	NR	S	4	28	Y	0	0	2	2	3	0	0	10	26
18	Nathaniel	36	B	M/M	HS	NR	E	2	23	Y	2	0	4	1	2	0	0	7	29
19	Noah	37	W	M/M	HS	NR	E	<1	30	Y	0	0	2	4	3	0	0	6	31
20	Oscar	38	H/L	M/M	< HS	NR	E	8	25	Y	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	6	32
21	Phillip	38	B	M/M	B	NR	E	9	23	N	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	10	28
22	Quincy	39	H/L	M/M	D	NR	E	2	30	N	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	6	33
23	Roland	39	H/L	M/M	M	C	E	13	22	N	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	19	20
24	Samuel	39	W	M/M	HS	C	E	<1	33	Y	0	0	0	6	6	3	0	7	32
25	Solomon	40	B	M/M	< HS	C	E	10	23	N	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	17	23
26	Theodore	40	B	M/M	D	C	E	4	30	Y	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	13	27
27	Victor	40	H/L	M/M	< HS	M	S	12	27	N	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	11	29
28	Waldo	45	B	M/M	D	C	E	14	24	Y	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	5	40
29	Xavier	45	W	M/M	< HS	M	E	<1	36	Y	0	0	0	4	6	3	3	5	40
30	Yusuf	47	W	M/M	B	NR	E	1	39	N	0	0	0	1	1	2	8	6	41

Note. IP# = Interview Participant Number; Name = Pseudonym Name; Age = Current Age; R/E = Race/Ethnicity; S/G = Sex/Gender; EL = Education Level; RP= Religious Preference; PL = Preferred Language; IL = recent Incarceration Length; AI = Age at start of recent Incarceration; <18 = Incarcerated before 18 years old; < 10 = Number of arrests ages 5–9; 10–12 = Number of arrests ages 10–12; 13–17 = Number of arrests ages 13–17; 18–22 = Number of arrests ages 18–22; 23–27 = Number of arrests ages 23–27; 27–30 = Number of arrests ages 27–30; > 30 = Number of arrests ages 31–40; LI = years since Last Involvement. LC = Age of Last Criminality

Figure 3 provides an isolated disaggregation of the time elapsed since individual participants engaged in criminal activity. The range was between 5 years and 19 years. Eighty percent of participants reported they have been free of criminal activity for a period of 5 to 10 years.

Figure 3

Years Since Involvement in Criminal Action

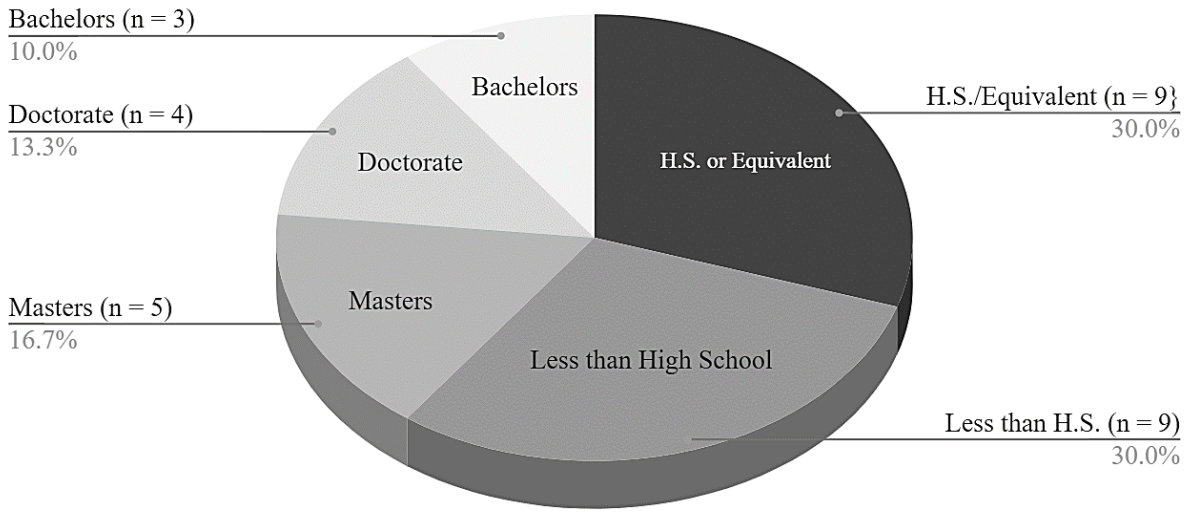


Note. $N = 30$ interview participants.

Figures 4 and 5 offer another perspective on the data collected, providing additional details about the subjects of the study. Specifically, Figure 4 illustrates comparative data on the education levels attained by interview participants. While the majority of interview participants (60%) had the equivalent of a high school education or less, 10% of interview participants had a baccalaureate degree and the remaining 30% attained a graduate degree (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Highest Level of Formal Education Completed by Interview Participants



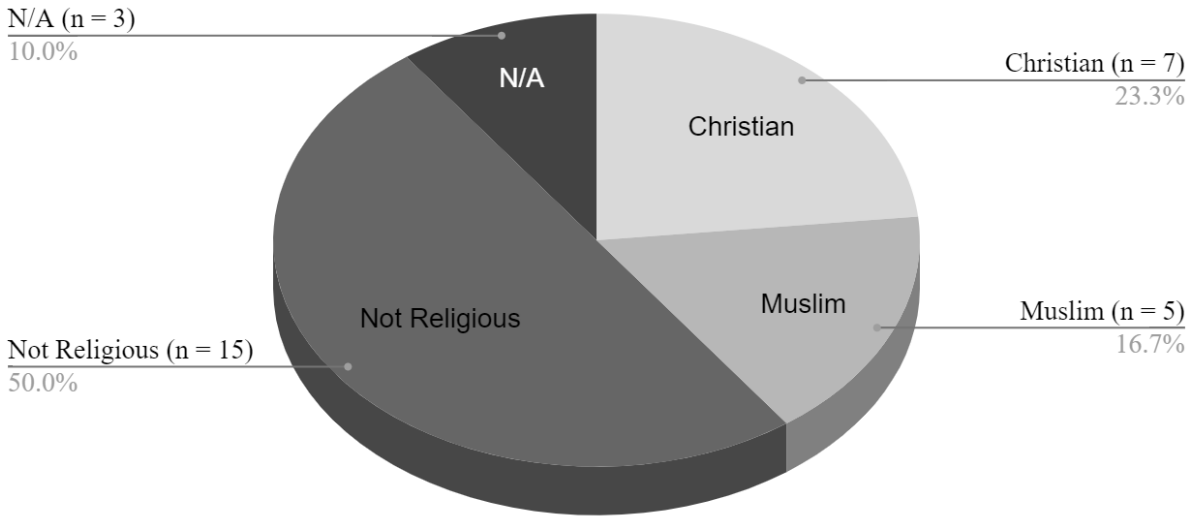
Note. N = 30 interview participants.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of self-reported religious identity of interview participants, with a notable 50% of participants responding that they are not religious. Additionally, an analysis of the interview sample in which age ranges are split into younger and older segments reveals that 25% of interview participants ages 25 to 35 identified as having a religious identity, whereas 57.1% of interview participants between the ages of 36 and 47 identified as having religious identities. These percentages differ only slightly from those of survey participants, with 25.03% of the 73 survey participants between the ages 25 to 35

indicating that they have a religious identity and 57.33% of the 75 survey participants between the ages of 26 and 47 indicating they hold a religious identity.

Figure 5

Religious Identity of Interview Participants



Note. NC = 30 interview participants.

Other contextualizing facts extracted from this data included:

- The length of participants' most recent incarceration ranged from less than one year to 14 years, with most values at the low end and the average length of individuals' most recent incarcerations was 4.9 years (Q8). In this same category, survey participant responses ranged from less than one year to 16 years, with the average length of incarceration 1.9 years.
- Participants' ages at the start of their most recent incarcerations ranged from 19 to 39 years old, with 80% of participants 28 years old or younger (Q9). In this same category, survey participant responses ranged from ages 18 to 39 with 74.33% of participants having been 28 years old or younger.

- A total of 63.3% of interview participants reported they were incarcerated prior to age 18 (Q13). In this same category, 27.7% of survey participants indicated that they had been incarcerated prior to age 18.
- Nearly half (46.67%) of the interview participants reported they had been arrested between the ages of 13 and 17 (Q14). In this same category, 20.27% of survey participants responded that had been arrested between the ages of 13 and 17.
- Only 3.33% of interview participants reported having been arrested between ages 10 and 12 (Q14). In this same category, 2.03% of survey participants responded that they had been arrested between the ages of 10 and 12.
- Finally, 13.33% of interview participants reported having been arrested between the ages of 5 and 9 (Q14). In this same category, 4.05% of survey participants responded that they were arrested between the ages of 5 and 9.

Significance of Contextual Data

The variance of experiences and identities evidenced through even a simple analysis of the demographic data attests to a critical understanding—despite the criteria of the study having required a risk of creating a homogenous study sample in its implementation, the participants of this study were not a monolith.

Some of the categories in which the breadth of heterogeneity manifests among this study's participants were: religious identity (Q6), completed formal education (Q5), and length of time since involvement in criminal activity (Q15). Further evidencing the diversity of the sample are contextualizations that were gleaned through the interview process. Nearly half of participants (43.33%) reported being from suburban and rural areas of New York State, and 56.66% having reported being from major metropolitan cities. Additionally, of the 52

correctional facilities run by the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (NYSDOCCS), participants referenced having been residents of 21 (40.38%) of the facilities.

The range of diversity in experience and identity in the representative sample, which mirrors the demographics of the state's prison population, resulted in this research's findings being all the more informative. As trends surfaced in participants' articulations, despite differences in their identities, locations, and experiences, the similarities in their learning experiences' conditions and outcomes became all the more relevant.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this naturalistic inquiry was to explore the perceptions of violent offenders' learning experiences as those experiences relate to criminal desistance. This research may help address the problems of mass incarceration and recidivism through an arrived understanding of the manners in which learning experiences resulted in participants' desistance from criminal activity. This chapter begins with a review of the research questions explored in the study and a brief overview of the main findings. Presented thematically, these findings are offered in concert with the detailed descriptions of interview participants' learning experiences.

During the coding of the participant interviews, it became clear that the more significant findings of the research emerged when integrative codes-clusters demonstrated connections across concepts (Appendix G). The result of the emergence of integrative code clusters was an ability to recognize patterns of occurrences that were more remarkable than the appearance of any one code in isolation. Akin to the presented conceptual framework, this study's findings underscore how the theories and elements that inform this research overlap and interconnect in ways that substantiate mutual dependence. After this chapter's initial brief of findings, a more substantial review of each finding will follow. In the latter, there is a provision of representative data from participants' interviews for each finding.

Review of Research Questions and Main Findings

This chapter presents key findings from 30 in-depth participant interviews, each embedded with an illustrative tool and critical incident protocol. Each of the interviews was conducted remotely through Zoom (video call service). In constructing the interview protocol, I sought insight into four main research questions. In turn, the use of the protocol produced nine

major findings that each contributed a response to one or more of the posed research questions (see Table 5).

Table 5

Alignment of Findings to Research Questions

Finding	RQ 1	RQ 2	RQ 3	RQ 4
Finding #1: Resource insecurity and preoccupation with threat were common barriers to desistance.			X	X
Finding #2: Success in endeavors separate from the goal of avoiding criminality were generalizable and led to reflection and changes in self-concept.	X	X	X	X
Finding #3: Changes in self-concept led participants to reflect on resulting changes in their needs, values, and perspectives.	X	X	X	X
Finding #4: While verbal persuasion had a significant impact on participants, perception of the providers' motivation was a determiner of whether verbal persuasion acted as a support or hindrance.	X	X	X	X
Finding #5: Participants viewed their desistance as having been separate from occurrences in which they may have appeared to be desistant under custody.	X		X	X
Finding #6: Desistance required a reconsideration of early, repeated, and internalized experiences that they attributed as having led to the adoption of limiting self-beliefs and a view of incarceration as inevitable or deserved.	X	X		X
Finding #7: Formative youth and adolescent experiences played a significant role in participants' arrival at adult criminality.	X	X		X
Finding #8: Reflection on somatic responses in preparation for moments of stress was integral to participants' efforts to remain desistant from criminality.	X	X	X	X
Finding #9: Participants described themselves as having become a new or different individual due to critical learning that occurred during the desistance process.		X	X	

Note. RQ1: What experiences do participants perceive as having been fundamental to their desistance? RQ2: What role, if any, does self-perception and self-assessment play in participants' desistance from criminality? RQ3: What do participants perceive as having been supports or hindrances to their desistance? RQ4: What recommendations can this research offer to those designing and engaging in desistance education?

What follows is a discussion of the findings with details that support and explain each finding by utilizing "thick description" (Denzin, 2001) provided by a wide range of participants. Documented are a broad range of experiences to provide the reader with ample opportunity to enter into the study and gain insight into the research participants' experiences. Throughout this findings chapter, the emphasis was on ensuring that participants' articulations led the narrative consideration of what this research revealed. Illustrative quotations taken from interview transcripts attempt to portray multiple participants' perspectives and capture some of the subject matter's richness and complexity.

Finding #1: Common Barriers to Desistance

Finding #1 revealed that resource insecurity and preoccupation with threat were common barriers to desistance (30 of 30). Throughout the interviews, most participants offered descriptions of a necessary preoccupation with gathering and protecting essential resources (NC = 30). In each of the interviews, participants described the reduction in viable options for resource attainment that initiated their criminality as progressively worsening through each cycle of offense, arrest, incarceration, and release (NC = 30) as a result of stigma (NC = 25), lowered self-efficacy (NC = 30), the existence of increased competition for limited resources (NC = 30) and a reduction of opportunities at each stage from offense to release (NC = 30). Participant 22 (Quincy) explained his early preoccupation with survival, the gathering of essential resources, and the navigation of threat:

> From a young age I knew that if I didn't eat quickly someone else was going to take the food from my plate—and I mean that literally and figuratively. Looking around at the people who had, and I'm talking about basic needs—water, clean clothes, cable—it was the people who hustled 24/7. Hustling is the mindset, it means figuring out how to survive, and giving everything you have because anything less and you're not going to eat, but it's also being in constant danger because as soon as you have something, everyone who doesn't have it is coming to take it from you.

The need for attention toward survival meant interview participants were constantly navigating the fluctuating dichotomy of having to continually and simultaneously allocate and exert the entirety of their physical and cognitive energy to secure essential resources while needing to be vigilant of constant threats to amassed resources (NC = 30). In line with what interview participants described across interviews, Participant 10 (Frederick) provided insight that supported further understanding of the toll these considerations take on cognitive resources:

> Why am I like this? Why do I do this? I had never asked myself those questions. I don't think most people do. Hustling in the streets every day and night thinking *I need to flip rock to make a certain amount*—when we talk about perspectives … poor people don't get to have a perspective. What perspective is there to have if you're always trying to survive? (Frederick)

Other comments, such as those from Participants 6 (Christopher), 15 (Louis), and 3 (Caleb), further supported the prevalence of the aforementioned experiences, conditions, and the manners in which the preoccupation with survival meant an inability to engage in reflection or search for alternative options to the meeting of essential needs. Christopher explained, "It is 'a survival mode' thing, you're still only thinking about the immediate." Louis concurred, "You're like an animal in the jungle, you're always fighting to eat and not be eaten." Caleb added, "I was spending all my energy thinking about protection while in jail and then again protection when I got out."

Christopher's explanation of the conditions he faced upon release exemplify how social constructs, and competition generated as a result of the race for limited resources, place individuals further from entering the reflective space required for desistance (NC = 30). Christopher described how resource insecurity, imposed, limiting self-concepts, and authoritative oppression resulted in his living in a condition of continual and growing threats. Tracing the cyclic progression of resource insecurity and threat, he stated:

> As soon as you're out, you're a target. Some people want to make a name on you. Killing someone who's been in lock up can move you up in a gang. Sometimes, it's revenge, because if you hurt or killed someone, especially in the hood, someone is going to line you up, which is not unreasonable. I got locked up because I went after the dudes who killed my 9-year-old nephew. Whoever you rolled with is always low-key wondering what you did to survive in lock up or to be released—so you've gotta act quick to prove that you're still ridin for em. Which is never something small, usually it means you gotta catch a body [kill someone]. Or if you joined up [joined a gang] in the lock [prison], they expect you to put in work when you get out. And they been kite'd [contacted] the outside [affiliated gang member outside of prison] who are expecting you.
>
> Then the craziest part is the precinct gets a bulletin that you got released and they start looking for you because you're an easy target. They can say you jaywalked and get you against your parole or probation. A lotta the time, they Po [police] see you as an easy vic [victim] because they can plant whatever on you and no one is gonna believe you. And if you released to your own care, your build [building] or even your crib [home] might be a spot where shit get done [where criminality is present] and as soon as you act funny, niggas think you snitched and will chop you up [kill you].
>
> I'm not gonna hold you [to be honest], you're safer in lock than coming out. Everyone feels more comfortable with you dead… when you get out. At least in lock you had food and sometimes medical. Outside, you don't even have that. How am I supposed to be able to get straight when they drop you in the middle of all that? It's designed for you to get killed, mentally and physically. (Christopher)

Christopher's description offered insight into how the state of constant threat described across interview participants continually expanded as competition for, and the scarcity of, essential resources grew (NC = 30), and how this expansion led to an increase in violence and the need and use of resources seen as offering protection or safety (NC = 30).

Moreover, Christopher's descriptions illustrated the manners in which his release made him an accessible target, to include the presence of (a) individuals seeking to gain notoriety advantageous to their progression as gang members; (b) individuals seeking revenge for past offenses; (c) individuals with concerns about allegiance; and (d) police in search of someone they could easily frame due to institutional perceptions of formerly incarcerated individuals as having low credibility. Such dangers resulted in the participant facing as many, if not more, threats than encountered within the confines of incarceration (NC = 30). Like other interview participants, Christopher stated that release from incarceration presented the added challenge of

navigating spaces in which he had previously engaged in criminality (NC = 25). This challenge was a common occurrence for interview participants whom the justice system mandated a return to the community in which they offended (NC = 25), that was further compounded by participants also having the added challenge of navigating access to essential resources such as food and medical care (NC = 30)

Finding #2: Reflection and Changes in Self-Concept

Finding #2 uncovered how success in endeavors—separate from the goal of avoiding criminality—were generalizable and led to reflection and changes in self-concept (30 of 30). One of the primary findings of this study was that for most interview participants, feelings of success and increased efficacy resulted from triumphs in endeavors (separate from desistance) and were transferable (NC = 30). In recounting the occurrence of their reflection-inducing successes, each of the interview participants described the initiating event of their desistance process and commented on it being synonymous with a revelation or epiphany. The event served as an indicator of ability that, in turn, caused them to see themselves differently (NC = 30). In connection to this point, each of the interview participants described their desistance as having begun as a result of perceiving themselves as being able to occupy roles and inhabit identities beyond what they previously thought possible (NC = 30)

While success was a central component to the desistance initiating process, interview participants required the satisfying of critical stipulations to perceive their success as authentic and the opportunities presented by their success as viable. Participants required that their previous criminality be absent—neither modifying their new roles (NC = 29) nor the metric used for their appraisal (NC = 29). Instead, to perceive an opportunity to desist through the adoption of new self-concepts as plausible, participants required that appraisal of their probability for

success was relative to the performance of others whom they saw as unbound by resource limitations (NC = 29).

Throughout participant interviews, there was a repeated reference to feelings of increased efficacy when participants were assessed as equally or more capable than individuals and groups they perceived as better prepared. Such perceptions were based upon what participants assumed to have been their trajectories of experience toward observed outcomes (NC = 30). Quincy explained:

> It was one thing to be told that I am good at Math for a poor kid or Black man. It was a whole different thing to be told I was the best scholar or thinker in the room of people who had dedicated their lives to thinking and learning.

In describing this stipulation, most interview participants elaborated on a correlation between the magnitude of what they perceived as a stark discrepancy between new information, their established assumptions, and their ability to view the rejection of the long-held beliefs as plausible (NC = 26). Speaking about the need for a large degree of incongruence between appraisal and previously held assumptions, Participant 13 (Israel) commented:

> It had to be jarring. Anything adjacent to what you used to believe, you just assume there are connectors or explanations that you don't know about, or exceptions, and that the things you know as facts hold true. But when something disrupts the physics of your reality, everything that you held as absolute is up for debate.

While each interview participant offered some form of stipulation for viewing success as authentic, most expressed the need for a high degree of dissonance between new information and previously held self-concepts (NC = 22). Yet, not all participants experienced the impact of authentic success in the same ways. Despite differences in participant experiences, each of the participants' experiences of desistance-initiating success resulted in an immediate change, an adjustment in perspective, or an alteration of identity (NC = 30). Louis shared:

> Incarceration had erased any memory I had of success, it felt like the life I had previously was fictitious. Now remember, at twenty-three I had a master's degree, I had

> gotten married, I had 2 kids—I had succeeded in so many ways. In prison, you lose the ability, you lose the allowance to make any of my own decisions. So, when I was released, instantly, I started thinking about who had resources that I could take because I didn't believe that I'd be able to get them any other way. And then this thing happened, I wanted a hot shower, and the plumbing wasn't working. Again, no financial resources, so I went down to the basement and took a look at the boiler, … six hours later, I remember sitting and laughing and thinking, "I'm back, Baby!" After that, problems didn't seem smaller, but I felt bigger. Like, if I could fix the hot water, I could part them too.

Participant 21 (Phillip) described his experience:

> I didn't want a job because I'd never been able to keep one longer than a few weeks. My depression goes too high and low. So, while I may have been good for a week, I could've been the star employee, eventually my depression would come. Once the depression hits, even getting out of bed feels impossible. So I signed up for a sew house in Harlem that would let me come in and sew products for purchase and it was kind of a show-up-when-you-can thing for me…after 6 months, I remember the director had told me my bags were impressive... And then I remember, that same day when someone passed me a gun, in my mind I thought to myself, "You're a designer now. You don't do this." And then I ran away. That was the end of that life for me.

Some experiences of desistance-initiating success were designed and orchestrated by the individual participants themselves. These experiences involved the purposeful setting of a goal with the idea of using success as metric evidence of a likelihood or possibility of further or future success in other endeavors (NC = 15). Participant 14 (James) recalled:

> The idea of getting locked up again is like a monster behind you. You know he is going to get you because he doesn't get tired. That's why some people, they just let go, and the monster opens his mouth, and he eats him. Because they run out of energy. I had already done this, after the first time locked up. I tried everything. I went to all the programs, but I still felt the monster right behind me until he got me. About one month after the second lock up, I remember it was a red book called integrated mathematics and it was the same one we had in high school. And I thought to myself, if I can get through this book, I can get out of jail and stay out. Until this day, I don't know how they related, I just knew they did.

Participant 24 (Samuel) relayed his motivation as a father:

> I knew that where I had failed the worst was in being a father. So, I knew that if I could repair that relationship and be a good father, then I could flip the script on everything else. Being a father was the thing I knew the least about. I understood how to get a job, and how to get an apartment, I understood all the parts of living—I didn't need a coach or a social worker or a program. I needed to defeat the thing I was the worst at, where the most was out of my control —everything else would be simpler.

Even in scenarios, such as those described above, in which interview participants curated their desistance-initiating experiences of successes through the setting of goals and arrivals at markers of accomplishment, participants still often sought to appraise themselves against what they perceived as the anticipated performance of populations with environmental, social, and institutional advantages (NC = 12). Samuel continued:

> I spent a lot time asking people about their fathers and then would see how their fathers f**king up, f**cked them up or how their fathers did a good job and then would decide how good or bad I was doing based on that. After a while, I even started doing it with TV dads, and asking people who made it better off in life what their dads did to be there for them.

Whether success came from unforeseen events and experiences or a purposeful and methodical approach to a goal, for each participant, there was a clearly articulated shift in self-concept and identity (NC = 30). Christopher commented:

> Sometimes, you look at your whole life and you're like, "Damn, I've never really had a win—or even an opportunity." And the opportunities that have been put in front of you were never really opportunities. It was always like being asked, "which way would you prefer to die?" So when I got accepted to the plant program, and it wasn't for ex-cons, it was for the people.
>
> And even those first days when my plants kept dying, I would see the little rebounds, the plants coming back, and I was like—"I grew something." And then like a little *abuelita* would help me, and I was like, "Oh shit, she isn't scared of me. I'm one of the people!" But I didn't really believe it. I liked it, but I didn't believe it. And then, when stuff started growing, I was like "Aha!" because now I could be one of the people, because I was no longer a convict, you see what I'm saying—I was a planter, and I could go be part of the community as a planter. .
>
> I said, "Hey *abuelita*, could you show me that again. And that's how I won double"… to go back to the beginning, I always said if I could get one win, I could make another happen, and that's how it happened.

Participant 2 (Brian) recalled how meditation changed his perspective:

> In 12 years is a whole life and all you're getting is input on how to do all the things that put people in prison to begin with…. By year 2, I was in the motions of lock-up and I remember being put in isolation and wanting to get away from the place I was in. I had no paper or pen so I couldn't even draw or write because they knew if I got hold of anything, I would put out a hit. or even make it into a weapon. In year 2, I meditated because I could feel myself dying from the isolation and I was able to taste the beach, the salt air. This changed my whole view of everything. If I could close my eyes and go in

> my mind and be at the beach, then I could change anything. I realized I am the creator of my own destiny. That I had that power is what helped me during struggles once I got out. When things got challenging, I didn't feel powerless, I wasn't a victim anymore. I knew that I could figure out alternatives

Participant 12 (Henry) shared a similar story of an event that helped change his perspective:

> I had written plays while incarcerated because I wanted to remember the people. There are glimpses of tenderness when men put their guard down and they're more noticeable in environments where no one puts their guard down. It's a lot like falling in love. So, I'd wrote these plays and while some people had seen them, and I even self-produced some of them as part of playwriting partnership with a college, it always felt like the part that impressed people was that an ex-felon had wrote them and that it allowed them a pornography of others misfortune. Almost like going to a zoo to watch an animal do a trick. So, I took my plays, and I re-wrote them so that nothing changed except the location…
>
> I remember when I had gotten the award, the letter was sent to my sister's house. because I didn't want them to know that I was in prison when I entered the contest. I remember when my sister brought the letter, I remember thinking, "I got out of jail today, I am no longer a prisoner who is playwright, even from behind the glass, jumpsuit and all, I'm a playwright who is a prisoner." And while those two may have some overlap, they move through the world very differently.

Interview participants majoritively voiced that their experience of desistance initiating events was one in which they wholly adopted entirely new title-specific identities or personas, rather than having initiated the gathering of a cumulative set of more minor revisions to self-concepts (NC = 19). Describing themselves as having adopted or generated new self-concepts, these participants assumed that their embodiment of specific identities meant that the options that they saw as inherent to those identities were available to them (NC = 19). Additionally, they assumed that their perception of options suggested an ability to exercise a chosen option despite unknown variables (NC = 19). Thus, in like manner to participants who had adopted new self-concepts rather than specific identities, these interview participants sought to make revisions to embody their new identities and self-concepts more fully as they encountered incongruent perspectives left by beliefs that informed their previous identities (NC = 30).

Per their descriptions, the experiences of generating or adopting new self-concepts fell into two categories. In the first category, participants replaced a previously established self-concept with concrete and commonly defined titles such as Artist, Gardner, Playwright, and Community Worker (NC = 19). In the second category, participants did not benefit from having concrete titles of personage for the self-concepts they were exploring. Instead, these participants found definitions of self by negating those that they had previously accepted, and by holding to attributes synonymous with recognizing themselves as intelligent (NC = 11), which interview participants throughout the study differentiated from the concept of acquiring discrete skills. This differentiation between attributes and skills is depicted in interview participants' descriptions of skill appraisals as having little to no generalizable impact on their self-efficacy (NC = 30) and not being a cause for shifts in self-concept (NC = 30).

Notably, it was only in the accounts of participants belonging to the second category that participants made explicit recognition of their intersectionality (NC = 10). Below are the expressions of Participant 26 (Theodore). His statements below are illustrative of the thought process he underwent in trying to make sense of his identity:

> I took an account of all things I wasn't. Not black enough for some, not Hispanic enough for others, but in Virginia to the whites I was black, and in the south a northerner —a Yankee, and in the north I was a poor man. To have realized that no matter where I went in America, I was the thing detested by the room and the table, brought up this question of, *who am I.* I'm everyone and no one and I'd fallen into a trap because there was no one in America who was outraged to see me kept in a cage. If being locked away was about the things I'd, I would have been treated with contempt. Instead, I was being treated like this was all normal.

Like other participants, Theodore determined his identity by determining what he was not. In each of the articulations coded as being related to participants' recognition of their intersectionality, there were clear indicators of participants' considerations of how external entities classified them (NC = 10). In instances in which participants gained the efficacy of

success or attributes that conflicted with their previous limiting self-concepts but did not identify personas for which they were able to construct an explicit model, they still experienced removal of their previous persona. In these instances, participants often expressed their identities as negations of other identities. For Theodore, the identity adopted was one he refers to as "Not American."

> I wasn't able to see myself as having anything in common with the super rich—which meant I couldn't keep using America's metric of success. If I kept using society's measures of success, I was going to kill myself. Even if I made it to that level of success, I'd still be too Black, too Latino, not enough of everything and too much of something for everyone. I wrote down a list of 'what is it to be American.' Not America is the closest I know to who and what I am, but it's concrete—no one can tell me otherwise. Not having the pressure of trying to be something in vain, I've got no drugs in me because I'm not trying to change a permanent reality. (Theodore)

Participants who experienced this type of identity by negation still inherently took on new identities. Despite their generating new identities through a negating of prior self-concept rather than presence, these participants still engaged in alignment away from identities associated with violence and criminality (NC = 11).

While both sets of interview participants, those with affirmed identities and those who negated previous identities, spoke to their success and their gained efficacy as being generalizable (NC = 30). Members of the former described themselves as having taken on new and specific identities because they had evidence of holding a required central attribute of the personas they chose to inhabit (NC = 19). Interestingly, in response to an inquiry into whether interview participants took on identities that were in any way connected to personas they had dreamt of or aspired to in the past, participants within this subgroup were divided on whether they had considered the specific identity they adopted as being a goal (NC = 8). Most participants who indicated that they had aspired to specific identities related to their efficacy

attainment felt the need to underscore that they would have been just as motivated to inhabit any identity other than one associated with criminality (NC = 7).

In some instances, even what interview participants described as a temporary success or unproductive opportunity were framed as increasing efficacy and being a presentation or addition of options beyond those previously perceived (NC = 14). In each case, the experience's effect continued beyond the length of the temporary successes or opportunities and transferred even when experiences resulted in a loss. (NC = 14). Participant 39 (Xavier) stated:

> I'd always felt like if the circumstances went south that I would go back to dealing, so while I hadn't been involved in a crime, I didn't think I was going to have any other choice. I believed that eventually, everything gold turns to shit.
>
> I was working as a doorman and those jobs don't usually go to former convicts. All it takes is one bullshit complaint, it could be that they don't like your haircut and you're out. Or it could be somebody googled you and found out you did a bid. But I had gotten this job on the low, so there was no background check.
>
> Where the change happened was when I'd saved up enough to buy an apartment. It boosted my confidence. I felt like a winner because I was able to save up and buy a house. And to be real, something weird happened. Even when I lost the job because of a background check and the lost apartment, I knew that I could do it again and the options never went back to what they were. Once a man realizes he's more than what people told him his whole life—okay, his options never go back to the limit they were at.

In many cases, interview participants recounted that the success and efficacy gained from mastery experiences resulted in a perception of increased options that they saw as a reason to engage in gradual and recurring consideration of their actions toward newly acquired identities (NC = 28). Moreover, many in this segment of interview participants expressed having experienced a growing intolerance for repetition of their previous practices due to an increase in alternative options (NC = 24). Quincy detailed:

> There was an incongruence between my habits of action and the identity I had developed for myself as a result of my interactions with the math professor. I knew that what I was doing was high level. But once I was able to solve equations that the head of the department could not, I had to examine where that ability and the moments of intellectual curiosity were at odds with the animalistic decisions I was habitually making.
>
> The more I engaged with my identity as a mathematician, which for me began on the day I realized I could solve that equation, the more acting in violence felt like a betrayal.

> Not only that, but the original belief I had about why I was engaging in violence, my belief that I had no other options—which was true for a very long time—was becoming a weaker fallacy every time I examined it.

Participant 17 (Michael) also shared his story:

> Any criminal, contrary to what you might see on TV, is doing dirt to fulfill a basic need. That may be safety—that's why someone wants power. Maybe food and shelter, it may be to take care of loved ones—that's why some want money. And the scariest thing that happened to me was when my internship turned into an interview for lower management. I did not get the job, but now I knew that I was capable of being a leader, and because now I had other options, each time I was continuing my previous actions, it was a struggle. Finally, until after enough fights with myself—it was like the new version of me had won me.

Michael went on to articulate what he described as a "struggle" in the aforementioned:

> One voice was saying to myself "you could do this," and the other voice asked me, "what you, you don't think other people have tried." But I had already proven to myself that I could be successful. Even though it was true, this country and the whole white world have created systems to ensure that I fail, there's a chance that I could beat them. And if there's a chance, that's better than the options I'd had in my past.

Of note is that 14 of the 30 interview participants included the construct of winning or losing in comments related to this finding (NC = 14). Moreover, many interview participants implied a close association between held identities and the likelihood of, or opportunity for, success. These comments mirror the development of a futility perspective due to early and repeated evidence of their inability that occurred for a majority of interview participants (see Finding #6).

Also of note is the fact that, while interview participants articulated that the sense of efficacy attained through experiences not directly related to desistance had a degree of permanence, it did not result in the complete removal of feelings of skepticism as to whether they would succeed in their desistance (NC = 30). While each of the participants felt that they eventually came to a point where they did not desire any involvement with criminality or

violence, each participant spoke about their fear of situations where they would either not perceive, or be given, options that would allow their desistance to continue (NC = 30).

Finding #3: Changes in Needs, Values, and Perspectives

Finding #3 postulated that changes in self-concept led participants to reflect on resulting changes in their needs, values, and perspectives (30 of 30). The phrasing utilized for this finding, "led participants to reflect on, reconsider, and shift the logic of their interactions with society," is meant to highlight that changes in self-concept did not automatically result in changes in behavior or perspective but instead engendered participants towards reflection on their actions and outlooks. In this sense, changes in the logic of interactions that followed self-concept alterations were not happenstantial but done with intention.

While interview participants offered expressions of their pre-desistance needs, values, and perspectives as being centered on issues of survival (NC = 30), they described their shift in self-concept as leading to their deviation from a previous form of living centered around a fight for essential resources (NC = 30). Participant 10 (Frederick) articulated this point by saying:

> Why am I like this? Why do I do this? I had never asked myself those questions. I don't think most people do. Hustling in the streets every day and night thinking *I need to flip rock to make a certain amount*—when we talk about perspectives … poor people don't get to have a perspective. What perspective is there to have if you're always trying to survive?
>
> So, when people judge a gangsta, I ask them to think about a world where they don't have food, a bed, where they're being hunted and where they don't have any hope… only enough food and medicine for three families out of every thirty. Your kids are sick and hungry, and then I say to them, "How civilized would you be?" How civil will you be when you've gathered some resources for your family and there are groups of people hunting you, your family, and your resources?
>
> I'm long but my point is short… if you're Latino or Black, *misma cosa*—to be your civilized self, you don't wanna dirt or scam or hustle in the streets, so you gotta be willing to trade everything. And it almost doesn't make sense… if you stop trying to survive then it's only a matter of time until you die, but you can't be in mode for survival and really be alive. The problem is once you wake up, … you see non-survival you in the mirror—even just for a second,—once you see yourself as something instead of nothing, you're willing to die for it.

Supporting the expressions provided by Frederick were articulations given by other participants who described a reconsideration of needs that resulted from changes in self-concept (NC = 28) Christopher shared:

> I asked myself, "what the f**k do you need a gun for?" I had them [the guns] laying on the table next to my tomato plant and the little grow light and the whole little nursery. I was even playing Motown music for them. With Stevie Wonder in the background, I'm looking at these guns and I'm like, "they're for protection." Which makes sense until I ask myself who the fuck I need protection from. The tomatoes are not going to come for me. And then, I said*, "well who might come for me?"* And I imagined so-and-so coming in, because beef don't die. I know that every day in these streets someone might come for me, but I kid you not, I was like, "I'm really not trying to have that kind of violence in front of my kids" [plants].

Christopher went on to provide another example of having experienced a change in perceived need. In this instance, evidencing a reprioritization of needs and a change in values resulted from a change in self-concept. The participant, Christopher, noted:

> I knew the shit was different when I only had like thirty dollars. For my whole life since we was 10 years old, I needed to smoke a lil bit of weed—even in jail I smoked. It keeps me from feeling like everything is closing in. I remember I had only thirty dollars. I dunno if you smoke, but that's enough for a little dub.
>
> I still like to smoke every day, but that was kind of the first time I had that need go to the back. Like before, I would hold up a store if I needed too, steal, whatever. It was like needing air. But I knew that the bodega man had gotten robbed that morning, and I started thinking about his family. And I don't hold nobody for robbing, but I was thinking about—like damn, I'm a community member, and he's a community worker. And as badly as I wanted that dub, I was like, "Yo, I gotta take care of my community."
>
> So, I remember, I gave him the thirty and he was confused. He thought that I had something to do with the robbery—he couldn't understand, and I just kept telling him, "I'm a community member." But he couldn't understand, and I understand why because until that thinking happened, I used to be like that, where my needs came first.

Henry and Samuel offered similar expressions of need reprioritization in connection with a change or shift in identity: Henry stated:

> Food is less important when you have a purpose. We sometimes see parents who will feed their children all the food they have for the family, and we think to ourselves, "look at the self-sacrifice." And I'm not saying it isn't sacrifice, what I'm saying is that who we see ourselves as determines our priority during times of insecurity of basic needs.
>
> The prisoner who was a playwright needed a lot of things. He was always hungry to have something to make him feel like more than a prisoner. You can see it, like Levee in

> Wilson. The poorest people need an expensive item to feel like they have value. That could be food, it could be clothes, it could be a whole lot of things. But people who are well off, they have identities where the material possessions are in service to their spaces.
>
> As a playwright, I just needed my medium. Identity makes you hungry for things that are in the service of what you are. Ask me if I want a meal or some production space and the answer is simple.

Samuel recalled:

> I remember sitting down and making a list of all the things a father needed and a list of all things I needed. And while the list had a lot of the same things, money ended up being a lot lower on the list. And the thing that I never had, the security… of being in one place became a bigger need than money. If I was going to go clean, the only way to do it was to not half ass it.
>
> I always thought that my brothers [gang] was all I needed, and now suddenly it was more important to me to check my kids homework. There was a night that we had a mission and my kid was in my living room. I must've drank half a bottle of Jager trying to figure out what to do, that's how the list started. I needed my son to be safe more than I needed the order [the gang]. When I made the decision not to go, I decided that my son's safety was more important than mine. He was my front door [leading rider or navigator] now.

Most interview participants described the embodiment of their new self-concepts and identities as not being bound or compartmentalized to specific environments or social settings (NC = 26). Instead, most interview participants spoke about the self-concepts taken from their initiating experiences as having permeated across the boundaries of their most compartmentalized social circles and settings (NC = 21). In connection to descriptions offered by some of their self-concepts and newly adopted identities existing intersectionality, a majority of interview participants described their engagement in the revision of self-concepts and perspectives that they saw as putting them at risk while having no guarantee of success (NC = 26). By not bounding their new self-concepts and personas from spaces in which they would signal weakness or deviation from criminal pacts, and by allocating their resources to the further development of their new identities, rather than toward anticipation and response to threat, participants put themselves at risk for the sake of an opportunity to inhabit an identity with options for non-criminal success. Frederick offered the following in his comments:

> If you're Latino or Black, *misma cosa*—to be your civilized self, you don't wanna dirt or scam or hustle in the streets, so you gotta be willing to trade everything. And it almost doesn't make sense...if you stop trying to survive then it's only a matter of time until you die, but you can't be in mode for survival and really be alive. The problem is once you wake up, … you see non-survival you in the mirror—even just for a second,—once you see yourself as something instead of nothing, you're willing to die for it.

Like other participants, Frederick described a cognizance of the manners in which his new self-concept required a reallocation of resources from survival toward further alignment toward his chosen identity (NC = 15), which he referred to as his "civilized self." In categorizing his new identity as one of civility, Frederick drew an implied dichotomy between a preoccupation with survival and the space of self-development, which he later described as the condition of "really be[ing] alive." This state of non-living described by the participant echoes descriptions given by interview participants of a cognitively oppressive state. A survivalist preoccupation resulting from a lack of available resources left participants in a cyclic reaction to immediate threats and needs (NC = 30). The majority of these same interview participants described preoccupations related to resources, threat, and essential needs left participants unable to consider the past and future due to a lack of cognitive space or resource (NC = 26).

While participants described their shift from a preoccupation with survival, the shedding of their criminal personas and self-concepts did not result from perceiving themselves as being in the space of safety (NC = 0). Frederick described his willingness to die for the sake of inhabiting his new identity, moments after his assessment that willingness to do so "almost doesn't make sense." Frederick, like many participants, asserted that his decision to pursue his "civilized," or non-criminalized self, made him more prone to meet his demise due to inattention to matters of survival (NC = 26). In making this decision, Frederick, and participants like him, progressed their desistance despite their holding an supported belief that reflection in search of paths toward alternative outcomes was a nugatory and fruitless practice (NC = 30).

A majority of interview participants took on self-concepts and identities that some might perceive as requiring prerequisite knowledge, training, or experience. Despite this, participants followed a pattern of describing themselves as having adopted their new identities with an assuredness that they would be able to acquire necessary traits, knowledge, and perspective through a continuous process of learning and reflection (NC = 19). An examination of the descriptions offered by participants, their adoption of titles (e.g., artist, gardner, or playwright; NC = 19), and how most participants in this category continued to consciously align their perspectives and behaviors toward their new identities across social settings (even in the face of potentially dire circumstances) further verified the totality and assuredness with which participants took on new roles. Examples of participants actively reflecting to further align toward their new self-concepts consistently emerged across participant interviews (NC = 30). Christopher described:

> I asked myself, "What the fuck do you need a gun for? I had them [the guns] laying on the table next to my tomato plant and the little grow light and the whole little nursery. I was even playing Motown music for them. With Stevie Wonder in the background, I'm looking at these guns and I'm like, "they're for protection." Which makes sense until I ask myself who the fuck I need protection from. The tomatoes are not going to come for me. And then, I said, "well who might come for me?" And I imagined so-and-so coming in, because beef don't die, I know that every day in these streets, someone might come for me. But, I kid you not, I was like, "I'm really not trying to have that kind of violence in front of my kids [plants]."

Samuel offered a similar description of how his alignment toward his new identity as a father resulted in his decision to risk his safety for the sake of his son's:

> I needed my son to be safe more than I needed the order [the gang]. When I made the decision not to go, I decided that my son's safety was more important than mine. He was my front door [leading rider or navigator] now.

In considering the descriptions offered by interview participants, what became apparent was that for most, their desire to embody their newly chosen identities and self-concepts more fully led to their continual engagement in active reappraisal and reprioritization of their needs

(NC = 28). Henry commented extensively on the reappraisals that occurred as a result of his aligning his needs toward those connected to his new identity and went on to offer the following analogy:

> Food is less important when you have a purpose. We sometimes see parents who will feed their children all the food they have for the family, and we think to ourselves, "Look at the self-sacrifice." And I'm not saying it isn't sacrifice, what I'm saying is that who we see ourselves as determines our priority during times of insecurity of basic needs.

Henry drew a parallel between his experience and a parent's reappraisal of needs in response to arrival at a new self-concept. This parallel illustrated the manners in which linkages between identity and purpose impacted individuals and raised cause for further consideration of how participants' new self-concepts resulted in their decentering considerations of safety and essential requirement to focus on needs that they saw as related to the purposes of their new identities (NC = 26). Henry further explored this point in his description of his own decentering by saying:

> As a playwright, I just needed my medium. Identity makes you hungry for things that are in the service of what you are. Ask me if I want a meal or some production space and the answer is simple.

Additionally, interview participants described the emergence of purpose during their navigation and aligning toward new identities and self-concepts as a significant driver of their development agency (NC = 30). In most interviews, one specific area in which this agency appeared was in articulations related to no longer feeling dependent on drugs due to new self-concepts (NC = 20). In the expressions below, Participant 20 (Oscar) explained what he perceived as being the reason for his having previously needed drugs:

> I would use [drugs] to move the camera back... when you look at something from far away, it looks cleaner, more pristine. Drugs help you pan out, when you need to escape knowing how bad things are...the systems are designed to step on you. You medicate so you can forget for a second that there's a boot on your neck. And they wanna give me a program but not remove the boot.

> It's not depression that people use drugs to escape, it's circumstance. And I'm not saying I don't do drugs, everyone does drugs. I delivered in my messenger bag on wall street...What I'm saying is, every time they murdered another colored individual on television, I needed them [drugs].
>
> I needed them because of the terrorism of the police, of our politcal systems—and then there's the guilt, wondering if your life is so hard because of you, even though you know it's not because then things like poverty wouldn't be systemic. White people would be getting shot by police if it was about merit... we are born into trauma, and the trauma of our lineage is why Black people need drugs.

Oscar further explained the need for drug usage by saying:

> There are two types of highs, and you never know which you'll get. One is an emptiness where you get to stop the ride, everything stops. For a second, you're not black, or white, or poor, or worried. No one is dying or getting AIDS.Your rent is not due, you're not homeless,—everything just pauses. …With all the noise and the weight, it's painful. To be Brown or Black, is to have your brain be in a tornado all the time. You're always being hunted, you even hunt yourself, so you're in fight or flight.

These interview participants described their liberation from drug dependence as the result of their seeing the instrumentation and capability of their new identities and self-concepts as tools that they could wield to arrive at outcomes that were previously only available through them to drug use (NC = 20). One example of this rests in the detailed description of this occurrence offered by Oscar, who described his drug use as having been necessary for his survival. Oscar even went on to describe how the effects of drugs allowed him to temporarily overcome or pause the condition of being in what he referred to as a "fight or flight" mode:

> There are two types of highs and you never know which you'll get. One is an emptiness where you get to stop the ride, everything stops. For a second, you're not black, or white, or poor, or worried, no one is dying or getting aids, your rent is not due, you're not homeless,—everything just pauses. And I needed things to pause to enjoy something. With all the noise and the weight, you can't enjoy any single thing because your brain is in a tornado all the time.

Commenting further on the circumstances that led to his habitual drug use, Oscar then went on to explain that drugs allowed him to "dull the noise." He described his reason for his needing drugs further, stating that it was necessary for his survival, "I was doing drugs...so that the volume of life wouldn't kill me." As the majority of participants, Oscar described drug use as

a means of relief from the realities of the condition of resource insecurity, harmful self-perception, and social oppression, which he commented on at length through his interview:

> Every time they murdered another colored individual on television, I needed them [drugs]. I needed them because of the terrorism of the police, of our political systems,—and then there's the guilt, wondering if your life is so hard because of you, even though you know it's not because then things like poverty wouldn't be systemic. White people would be getting shot by police if it was about merit... We are born into trauma, and the trauma of our lineage is why Black people need drugs. (Oscar)

In step with other interviewees' comments, Oscar found that while drugs allowed for cognitive distance from the realities that demanded full use of his cognitive resources, his drug use often rendered him unable to engage in cognitive processes (NC = 20). He described this inability by saying, "I would load up on drugs and find myself ready to focus but with nothing to focus on. Drugs left me in this blank room." This emptiness of thought was heavily commented upon by participants who described drug use as having been a necessary part of their survival under their previous self-concept—with drugs described as a means of acquiring needed mental and emotional relief but without inclination toward, or the benefit of the reasoning faculties needed for, engagement in reflective processes.

The excerpt below illustrates how the instrumentation and abilities made available to Oscar through alignment to his new persona allowed him a method of achieving the relief that previously required drug use. Consequently, like others, Oscar gained an ability to use cognitive resources in service toward reflective thought and gained a sense of purpose by considering new self-concepts.

> I was doing drugs to dull the noise so that the volume of life wouldn't kill me. I'd load up and find myself ready to focus but with nothing to focus on. Drugs left me in this blank room. Then when we had the first art show, people who didn't know me were calling me the artist and that stayed with me. So, after that I saw myself as an Artist. I kept trying to think like an artist. I let a lil bit of the noise in as an experiment, and I kept doing less and less drugs, and seeing each time that I could handle it because the artist is not in it, he's not in the painting.

> When you're an artist, even though you're painting what you've lived, you're seeing it with perspective. There's space between you and reality. Because of that perspective, the artist can also change how much they want to feel what is in the painting. As an artist, I could turn the volume down or up where I wanted. So, I didn't need the drugs to create silence to survive anymore. I could just turn the volume down as I pleased. (Oscar)

In line with the comment provided by Oscar, Theodore described his process of desistance from drug use when he said:

> I wasn't able to see myself as having anything in common with the super rich—which meant I couldn't keep using America's metric of success. If I kept using society's measures of success, I was going to kill myself. Even if I made it to that level of success, I'd still be too Black, too Latino, not enough of everything and too much of something for everyone. I wrote down a list of 'what is it to be American.' Not America is the closest I know to who and what I am, but it's concrete—no one can tell me otherwise. Not having the pressure of trying to be something in vain, I've got no drugs in me because I'm not trying to change a permanent reality.

In ways, similar to Oscar, Theodore further supported the finding that the 20 referenced interview participants found themselves liberated from drug dependencies due to shifts in self-concept. In Theodore's case, liberation came from eliminating the pressure and injury caused by a previously perceived need to be externally received as having met "America's metric of success."

Finding #4: Impact of Verbal Persuasion

While verbal persuasion had a significant impact on participants, finding 4 revealed that participant perception of the providers' motivation was a determiner of whether verbal persuasion acted as a support or hindrance (30 of 30). Each of the participants described instances in which verbal persuasion was impactful toward their desistance (NC = 30). While not all verbal persuasion experiences impacted participants, the coding of participants' interviews surfaced trends that suggested occurrences of verbal persuasion could serve as a support (NC = 30) or a hindrance (NC = 24).

Verbal persuasion that influenced either participants' desire to or belief that they could desist from criminality were not directly related to the topic of desistance from criminality (NC = 30). Verbal persuasion that supported participants' desistance took many forms, including solicited and unsolicited feedback, advice, guidance, and commendation. Each of the interview participants' provided descriptions of verbal persuasion as support in which they considered the persuader(s) to be experts or authorities (either by certification or experience) in the area in which they were offering appraisal, and the persuader(s) were unaware that participants had a criminal history (NC = 30).

In alignment with the offerings of other participants, Participants 5, 22, and 3 explained the difficulty they had in accepting well-intentioned advice from those familiar with their criminal histories (NC = 30) and how interacting with individuals who did not know their history worked to benefit them. Participant 5 (Caesar) explained:

> People think they're supposed to be encouraging to you when you get out. Like if they don't encourage you, then you're gonna wig out and hurt yourself. Or if you're in program, they give you stuff that is too easy and talk about how great you did. Or if stuff is too hard, they tell you not to worry because you're doing your best. When I started taking the podcast course at the library, I wasn't being treated differently. So, when the teacher told me I was good at media and should apply to the internship, I knew he was saying it because he believed it—not because he saw me as someone needing encouragement.

Quincy shared:

> It's natural for us to carry biases. When people hear you've been incarcerated, especially for something violent, common assumptions are that you can't read, that you're not bright and that even if you are the exception, and you have these abilities, that there is a ceiling to your ability that isn't present for others.
>
> There are two types of people that I can't believe. One is anyone in the academy who knows what I've done. They automatically go into savior mode. The second are people who know me, who I have relationships with. Mothers, siblings, romantic partners, it's their job to make you feel good. While in the first case, they're telling you nice things to make them feel good, and in the second, they're telling you nice things—presumably because they love you.
>
> Being aware of the implicit biases and motivations, I can't ever take a compliment from these individuals at face value. I can't believe either of these groups. As soon as a

> colleague or faculty member who doesn't know my history recognizes my brilliance, or my talent, or my work as being valuable, I can internalize that because it's stripped of the motivations.

Caleb expressed:

> When the supervisor pulled me to the side to tell me I was doing a good job, it hit different because he wasn't like my family, where they're always like, "You're doing good, *mi'jo*, but you have to keep working hard."

When asked to articulate further the reason the comments made by his supervisor impacted him differently than comments made by family members, Caleb elaborated:

> The two things that I hate the most? Number one is being treated with gloves. If my daughter draws something ugly, I'm not going to tell her it's ugly. But I'm also not going to tell her it's beautiful because one day she is going to realize it is ugly, and she will know that she can't trust me.
>
> The other thing I hate is when people tell me I need to work hard. We all work hard every day and do our best. If you tell me I need to work harder, you are telling me that my best is not enough. Fuck that. I rather not do it at all then. The only reason to work hard is not to work hard later. But if it's going to go forever, why would I do that? If you work hard and build a nice house and then I tell you that if you want to keep it, you have to work that hard every day to keep the house. You going to give, to get rid away that house—chacho [boy].
>
> But when the supervisor talked to me, he said that I had good instincts and good skills with people. That's not about hard work. That's saying that even if I had to work hard before, now I have the tools, and I can do what might be hard very easily.

Participants who described well-intentioned verbal persuasion as a hindrance toward their desistance recounted instances in which the persuader either knew their criminal history (NC = 24) or was not an authority or expert on the subject of discussion (NC = 19). Participants differentiated instances in which well-intentioned verbal persuasion was a hindrance from instances in which they felt unable to trust the judgment or evaluations of others while acknowledging that there was sometimes overlap between the two. When asked to describe the overlap, participants described the activation of biases that would impact how the evaluator viewed, appraised, and interacted with them as the primary challenge of having an evaluator knowledgeable of their criminal history (NC = 24). In describing the challenge of being

appraised by someone they perceived as being without expertise or authority in the appraisal area, the hindrance experienced was mainly rooted in participants' feelings of frustration. In this regard, many of the interviewed cited that this was particularly challenging in situations in which the non-expert was a facilitator of mandated training (NC = 19) or was a friend or family member who took multiple opportunities to offer unsolicited advice (NC = 15).

Regarding instances in which interview participants felt they did not feel hindered but were unable to trust the judgment or evaluations given by others, they again cited challenges as rising from others' awareness of their criminal history. Participants described their inability to trust the judgment and evaluation of others as stemming mainly from their perception of verbal persuasion as a function of the persuader's obligation. Interview participants described obligation as being a result of personal relationship to the participants (NC = 25) or the duties of their profession (NC = 25). Participant 8 (David) asserted:

> If your job is to come and see, and tell me I'm doing good, and I know you say positive things to everyone—it's what you paid for. And you're gonna ask me how I know, and I'll tell you it because everyone in jail is talking about how their P.O., social worker, counselor told them they were doing good. How the fuck am I supposed to believe you when you telling this to everyone and almost everyone ends up back in the clink?

Notably, in response to an inquiry about settings in which well-intentioned verbal hindrance was particularly common, participants offered mandatory programming for convicted individuals, including (a) skill courses, (b) college courses, and (c) group counseling (NC = 23). Likewise, participants offered as a close second, non-mandatory programming in which persuaders chose to interact with the participant by focusing on their past (NC = 21). Caleb commented:

> I know that sometimes people want you to feel bad for what happened, because maybe they think if you feel bad that will keep you from doing it again. But other people telling you to feel bad only makes you angry—because it's about them. It's not about you, so it doesn't make you change.

In response to an inquiry of the same participants, whether they were at any point after the desistance process impacted by verbal persuasion intended to steer them toward criminal activity, only two responded in the affirmative (NC = 2). Other participants explained that they were unaffected by persuaders' attempts because they no longer saw these individuals as having expertise or insight (NC = 28). Additionally, interview participants explained that as a result of their engagement in the desistance process, they no longer exhibited a vulnerability toward appeals made to capitalize on their feeling of shame, fear, or guilt that persuaders had previously used to motivate them toward criminal action. Instead, they dismissed the persuaders as no longer relevant (NC = 30). The two participants who indicated that the persuader's attempts were impactful stated that the persuasion was both a support toward their desistance and a hindrance toward their return to criminality. Caleb cited an unwillingness to follow the suggestion of someone he saw as incapable based on their presented logic:

> When they would try to tell me, "Come, let's go do this or that. Let's rob these guys," I would look at them and the fact that they were going to rob and steal from people who also had no money… It wasn't a smart plan. I judged the person saying it and wondered, "why would I listen to this guy who doesn't even know who to rob?"

Participant 4 (Cassius) discussed his reaction to the persuader's articulation of the expectation that the participant would continue to work toward the goal of becoming a gang leader:

> I remember being told that I was being sent on a mission. Usually, a mission is something you don't come back from, and I felt lucky to be back. They kept telling me, "If you keep working hard you could be a big homie. You just gotta work your way up and keep working hard." I thought about all the work and realized it was a never-ending investment. For that, I could do something else.

Finding #5: View of Desistance

Finding #5 involved the participants' views of desistance, seen as separate from occurrences in which participants may have appeared to be desistant under custody (30 of 30). It was clear throughout participant interviews that they saw a difference between discontinuance or

temporary cessation from criminality, which participants frequently referred to as "half-timing," and the idea of desistance (NC = 30), which was commonly referred to by participants as "deading." When asked to explain the difference, Caesar offered the following explanation:

> When you're half-time, it's because either you're dayroom or because you presenting. When you dead, that's serious, just like when you're dead—that's forever. A lot of people can't dead because if you're part of a gang they might kill you, though a lot of people just move to get around that. So really to dead means that your old life and the person you were dies. You're not doing that anymore.

In explaining that individuals who temporarily discontinue their criminal activity are engaged in a fundamentally different practice from "deading" or desisting, Caesar outlined several key points that emerged with this finding. Underscoring the permanent nature of desistance, Caesar explained that deading requires a permanent change akin to death—and helps one understand that for many, desistance could result in being killed by others who are still involved in practices of criminality.

Within Caesar's articulation above, he also explained the motivations behind temporary desistance. He used two key terms, "dayroom" and "presenting." In the first case, *dayrooming* is responding to fear. In later articulations, Caesar explained that dayrooming is often the result of being afraid of others in (or out of) the incarcerated setting. Rather than challenge the hierarchy among those in their setting, individuals may dayroom—temporarily secede from criminal activity to avoid being viewed as challenging the authority or profitability of others involved in criminal practices (e.g., the sale of distribution of drugs, the selling of other individuals for sexual use). In the second case, the term *presenting* means to present or perform specific behaviors to gain the favor of individuals in authority. For incarcerated individuals seeking either the favor of correctional staff or release review boards, presenting (temporarily discontinuing a criminal behavior to give the appearance of having been rehabilitated) is a common strategy.

When asked about their desistance from criminality, 100% of interview participants described themselves as having engaged in dayrooming (NC = 21) or presenting (NC = 30) while incarcerated as a strategy for managing the interactions with external entities. When asked if any of their temporary cessations or temporary discontinuances of criminal practices connected to their eventual desistance, 100% of participants responded that it did not (NC = 30). Participants provided further explanation of how the experience of desistance differed from temporary desistance. Participant 7 (Daniel) offered:

> Stopping when it's a right now advantage to you is not stopping. To see this kind of advantage you don't have to think, it's in front of you. If I don't get caught selling drugs, I can get my parole officer to let me stay out later and go see my girl or hang out with my boys.... But one day that parole officer is not there so the benefit of not selling drugs is gone. And still, even when I had my P.O., I still sold drugs, I just made sure not to make it hot [to be obvious].
>
> When you really stop, it's separate. You never stop because of what you can get by stopping. You're not going to scare me or intimidate me or anyone into changing. That's not how it works.

Christopher expressed:

> This is simple. When you see cats [people] trying to present or put a show, saying "ah, ah, ah,—I'm not doing that," even if they think they mean it, it's for presentation. I don't know a single due [person] who left this life and decided to tell everyone about it. Deading is a private process. When you dead, you drop all parts of the life you dead because you were in some deep thought and something snapped—in a positive way—to make you have to change. Something made you see something different.
>
> What I'm trying to explain to you, what I'm trying to explain—is that the things that make you day-woo or present, that's still a survival mode thing. You're still only thinking about the immediate. But to dead, that's much deeper thinking that you can't do if you're still thinking about survival. Even my associates who found Allah or Jesus in jail, that was a survival move. If they're gonna do that as a dead, they gotta get out first and find the space to think.

Supporting Christopher's articulation about an inability to engage in the thinking that results in desistance, each of the interview participants talked about desistance as requiring mental space unavailable within incarcerated settings (NC = 30). Participants offered that this

lack of space was exacerbated, at times, by programs made mandatory as a stipulation of release (NC = 27). Louis stressed:

> To be locked up, is to be worried all the time. To quit this life, you really have to see yourself as something else and see you as that something else in the future. But thinking doesn't happen when everyone is attacking you, it doesn't fit when you're depressed, especially about the future—it doesn't fit. You're like an animal in the jungle, you're always fighting to eat and not be eaten.

Caleb argued:

> It doesn't fit in your life. There were programs that I'm sure would have helped if they weren't part of my sentence. Sometimes I read about prisons in other countries and the ones they send white people to—they're different. Imagine sitting by a lake and you see that life is beautiful and start to think about the life; but instead, where I am, the guards rape people and beat them up—even one time broke my eye in the socket for no reason. People, even me, I was spending all my energy thinking about protection while in jail and then again protection when I got out. But if you would look at me, like when I went to the board, they say "Oh, he's doing so good."

Brian asserted:

> Incarceration is a business. There is not care given to dignity or rehabilitation. It's designed to keep you on edge. You can't even begin to address the realities of your outside life when you're on the inside. They're two different puzzles. If incarceration offered a chance at redemption or reflection—not the sit in a circle and talk, but even just library time and access to research—and people would start to see who is actually at the root of their misery.
>
> Do you know how many times I wished I could have the mental space and opportunity to just watch a TED talk? And not watch it because someone forced me to and turned into an exercise, but to just have a second and space to sit with an idea that wasn't about protecting myself. Instead, they forced me to take a class on a twenty-year-old computer so that they can say they taught me Excel while the same guards that fucked me up are standing 2 feet away from me.

Having, in finding #1, provided a narrative of how immediate and ongoing threats extend into release and prevent participants from accessing the cognitive space and mental resources needed to engage in reflective learning toward desistance (NC = 30), a return to the descriptions offered by Christopher is of use in understanding how policy can prevent individuals from engaging in desistance while incentivizing a presentation of self as reformed (NC = 30).

Christopher stated:

> The problem is, you can't leave [move] because you're on probation or parole or in program [mandatory post-release programming]. You can't leave, so deading is not an option. Being safe is not an option. You're still surrounded by people who want to kill you and you don't have basics like food, a place to stay where people aren't going to find you. I didn't even have soap or clean clothes—which at least I had in prison.
>
> This happens to all of us. It's why sometimes people start dealing or scamming as soon as they get out, especially if you have someone you take care of. But if you ask the program directors or the parole officers, everyone is great, because we have to front. If a P.O. even smells something up, it's right back to lock-up, this time prolly for longer. So instead of thinking about how to really work things out, you're pushed to go deeper into the sh*t—to get better at it [criminal activity].

Finding #6: View of Incarceration

Finding #6 revealed that desistance required a reconsideration of early, repeated, and internalized experiences that participants attributed as having led to the adoption of limiting self-beliefs and a view of incarceration as inevitable or deserved (23 of 30). While most interview participants described childhood or adolescent experiences as having led to their viewing incarceration as inevitable or deserved, white interview participants were absent from this finding as they did not relate any supporting experiences. Each of the participants whose expressions coded to this finding described having to contend with feelings of powerlessness that they attributed as having begun as consequences of early, repeated, and internalized experiences during youth and adolescence (NC = 23). Each of the 23 participants described the conscious addressing of emotion and perspectives from formative childhood and adolescent experiences as necessary to combat attempts by persuasion toward reentry into criminal activity (NC = 23). Each of the negative formative experiences offered by participants in connection to this finding included an interaction what an authority in a school setting (NC = 16) and/or an interaction with law enforcement (NC = 16). Quincy reported:

> Any time something would go missing in school or a kid was talking to while the teacher asked for quiet—even when other kids confessed to it, the teacher would say that they were covering for me and send me to sit in the back of the room on the floor.

Participant 11 (Gilbert) professed:

> Any time someone tells you, or you see something and think you can be something different, you naturally weigh that against all the other information you've been given. And my entire god-forsaken life, I've been shown, I've been told over and over, that because of my heritage, I am a criminal. And in the same way my ancestors were slaughtered, I am going to be hunted by police, hunted by other people who are also being hunted and need to feel power.
>
> I was taught explicitly by these teachers who thought they were white saviors for coming to the res (reservation) as school teachers and evangelists of Whiteness as God—I was taught that incarceration and disease and drug addiction were just a consequence of my color. And I always thought, based on everything that happened since I was a small child, that there was zero possibility of my being freed.

Participant 18 (Nathaniel) recalled:

> To have been in school, and so young, and having handcuffs put on me in front of my classmates. And crying because I felt like my teachers would only see me as a criminal—I felt that. I cried because I felt that. I never felt in charge of my life again. I put on a hard exterior because I didn't want people to know I was a victim. I didn't want them to know how hurt and scared I was after that—not just in that moment—always.

Even in cases where families provided participants with counter-narratives, this did little to mitigate school personnel and officers recognized institutional authority (NC = 8). Cassius shared:

> No matter what my mother told me, it couldn't overcome the teachers telling me that I was going to go to jail one day. It couldn't overcome the police following me and questioning me about things I knew nothing about. I learned really early that I had the curse of being a criminal by inheritance of my skin and my poverty and that I wouldn't be allowed to be anything else.

Descriptions of formative events offered by interview participants that were coded to this finding made clear that these participants recognized these figures as having authority, by the nature of their positions (NC = 30). Further, societal narratives influenced participants' perspectives of these authorities in ways that resulted in seeing their judgment as trustworthy and their authority as absolute (NC = 30). Brian elaborated:

> I believed what I was told by people who were supposed to know better. Kids don't think teachers lie to them. They don't know, until they do, that police will hurt them. All of those lessons came, and it never occurred to me to go back and fact-check the things

> that I believed. I lived my whole life believing the things I was told about myself by people who were supposed to take care of me.

For many interview participants, the police force's authority and the school's authority worked in tandem as several described incidents in which they were publicly criminalized through unfounded arrests that schools initiated (NC = 18). Some interview participants went as far as to comment that they felt that their arrests occurred as retaliation for attempting to assert their right to an equitable education (NC = 11). Nathaniel recounted:

> My 2nd-grade teacher would never call on me, so after six months of not being called—this was just after Christmas break—and I had told my mom I wanted to be white for Christmas. When she asked me why, I said it was because I wanted to give answers too. My mom told me to just shout the answer if I knew it, and I did that. They had me arrested for disorderly conduct...I was six.

With many interview participants, like Nathaniel, being able to equate their discriminatory treatment as rooted in racial bias issued as youths (despite not having a complete understanding of systemic racism), it is not surprising that BIPOC interview participants began to recognize authority figures as enforcers of societal limitations (NC = 25). Drawing a connection between discriminatory treatment, inequity of resources and access, and their burgeoning cognizance of the systemic racism, BIPOC interview participants saw their subjection to the roles presented to them (as incarcerates and criminals) as ineluctable (NC = 25)

A majority of BIPOC interview participants described the impact of these occurrences as being made exponential by having had negative identities communicated to them in front of their peers (NC = 22) and by the cognizance that their desired objectives only seemed within reach of their non-discriminated peers' (NC = 25). Gilbert and Waldo, like many other interview participants, described how negative and limiting self-concepts generated during formative early interactions and experiences like those cited above, were environmentally and socially reinforced for them (NC = 25).

Gilbert commented:

> The men and boys around me, as young as ten, were all drinking alcohol and more to escape this reality. I watched males stronger and smarter than me get their heads bashed by police or drunk and bashing each other, and saw white men comes and kidnap girls and load them onto U-hauls—so without anyone having to explicitly tell me, I knew what these authorities claimed to be true—there would be no escaping.

Waldo echoed similar sentiment:

> By five years old, I knew I was going to be in the system. I'd seen it take my brothers, my neighbors, fathers. I saw it cut down hard-working men, educated men, men who'd gone to school and had a better shot than anybody—I saw the system eat them alive. Now imagine, you had every authority figure in your life tell you that you ain't shit when you're small. And when you're small, you believe authority figures because you're trained to. And now imagine it happened to all the other Black boys around you, so now you're getting the word from each other. Then add that the people who looked like me were the ones jailed on the TV.
>
> Even when I had enough money to see a movie growing up, or even now, the people who look like us are the villains, the incarcerated, the drug addicts, the lowest rung of our society. In whose imagination are Black and Brown men free in America? What the hell else was I supposed to think or believe when this one truth was all I was given?

A consideration of the experience offered by Michael portrayed how a teacher's authority can influence the generalized and core efficacies of young recipients:

> The voices of the adults who told me I'd fail, be locked up, am stupid, those voices play over and over whenever I tried to convince myself I could be good at something or change. I had a math teacher in the 5th grade who would say to the class, "Your destiny is written in the stars." And then he'd point at me and say, "except for you. Your future is written in the police blotter on page six" and all the kids would laugh. And I asked him one day, "Why would you say that?" And he said to me, "Look at your hands" before telling me that the only way I was going to make it was as a criminal—and he laughed. And I had to tell myself for years that he was wrong before I got the courage to try to succeed at something.

Like the majority of interviewed participants, Gilbert and Waldo explained that while they viewed their individual experiences with authorities as having been defining moments in their conceptual trajectory toward violence, criminality, and the upholding of limiting self-concepts (NC = 25), the conditions and experiences they witnessed as happening to their similarly positioned peers provided reification (NC = 21).

In describing how they learned to navigate the terrain of criminality, in light of the generation and adoption of limiting self-concepts, most interview participants pointed toward the verbal persuasion and vicarious influence of aspirational models who survived despite being subject to the same systemic boundaries. More specifically, these participants described these aspirational models as having a significant impact on their approach to filling unmet essential needs (NC = 25). Frederick provided a description representative of those offered by other participants:

> The thing about a Big Homey is he is not successful at anything other than surviving—but for Black and Brown people, that's the only winning. White winning is not available to us. So when you're a kid, you're like, "Damn, if not even Big can beat the system, I know I can't, *tu sabes*," but then you look at what he can do. He's got his basics covered, and takes care of his people, but everybody knows he had to sell drugs or kill people and everyone knows he's eventually gonna get killed too. But the lesson is there, if you want to survive, to put food in your Ma's fridge, or buy a coat for your daughter—this is the only way. You've gotta fight for it at all cost.

In response to an inquiry about influences that combated the beliefs discussed above, interview participants coded to this finding could neither recall significant influences or events that led to their challenging the immutability of their conditions or the limited number of roles and identities they saw as being available to them (NC = 25). Likewise, they could not recall instances in which they felt served or cared for by institutions (e.g., hospitals, banks, schools, police forces) during their youth. (NC = 25). Instead, what these participants described was current cognizance of the pervasiveness of oppression (NC = 16) and what they currently hold as evidence that their current distrust of institutions is well-warranted (NC = 11).

Most interview participants described the identification of the critical experiences that led to their generation or acceptance of perceptions of themselves as inadequate, limited, and powerless to be of crucial importance, as these were the formative memories that they needed to consciously address to remain desistant from criminality (NC = 23). Brian explained:

> I believed what I was told by people who were supposed to know better. Kids don't think teachers lie to them. They don't know, until they do, that police will hurt them. All of those lessons came, and it never occurred to me to go back and fact-check the things that I believed. I lived my whole life believing the things I was told about myself by people who were supposed to take care of me… And when I decided that I wanted to change my life, every day, I had to remind myself that the worthlessness I felt and the things I spent my life believing about myself my whole life were not written in stone.

While all of the participants coded for this finding described their re-engagement of formative experiences as serving as a means of identifying the origin of long-held beliefs and perspectives (NC = 23), more than half the participants described having to return to memories of these experience in order to reappraise events (NC = 17). Nathaniel affirmed:

> I went back to the school one night and looked through the window, and I had to do that because I had to look at the whole situation and see that even now, as an adult, those moments are complicated. And I had to see how that moment was the beginning of a long list of abuse. And because of the abuse, I was angry, and I had never really thought about why I was angry. Anger is the gift that abuse gives. That anger is what people got everywhere I went after that. I took it home, to relationships, to jobs. When I understood why I was angry, then I could start taking that apart.

Similarly, Phillip insisted:

> You have to tell them. You have to go in your memories and tell them they were wrong. For me, I had to go in my head and see what would have happened if I responded differently. It's not about the other people, I had to imagine small me and tell him, don't listen and think through what might have happened. And I had to do that with all the places I was hurt, and I had to show myself where the other person was wrong so that I can erase them from being able to control me. And then when I see what I would've been, I say, "Ah, that's the real me. That's who I'm going to be now."

Christopher addressed learning from one's failures. He posited:

> When a fighter loses, when a basketball team loses, they watch the tape. They go into the film room, and when they leave that room, you would think they won. They come out dancing and high five. They create an alternate reality and come out different men than when they went in.
>
> Their losing made them go back and see everything from where they put their feet to what their body language said. They watch every mistake they made. Every move and in here [points to head], they relive it differently. They can face the opponent now. If put back in that situation, they know what to do, and they get all the dopamine they would've gotten, and also now they've got a lesson—so they're upgraded, they're better than they would've been.

> As a human species, we're not wired to let go of our losses until we learn something. I had to go back to the tapes, starting from day one to learn why I was the way I was.

Describing the procedure of recalling and engaging with formative childhood and adolescent experiences with the explicit purpose of reevaluating events, participants repeatedly asserted that they saw these experiences as being causality for their perspectives and propensity toward criminal action and violence (NC = 23). Israel avowed:

> The physics of my reality—which I already explained were absolute—came from my childhood and adolescence. Society teaches children who they are and what they're allowed to do—even as adults—at a very young age.

From the message shared by Christopher, "As a human species, we're not wired to let go of our losses until we learn something. I had to go back to the tapes, starting from day one, to learn why I was the way I was."

Cassius upheld:

> No matter what my mother told me, it couldn't overcome the teachers telling me that I was going to go to jail one day. It couldn't overcome the police following me and questioning me about things I knew nothing about—I learned really early that I had the curse of being a criminal by inheritance of my skin and my poverty and that I wouldn't be allowed to be anything else.

As participants recalled the formative youth experiences that they mined for reappraisal and why they felt the need to do so after having, in many cases, consciously avoided engaging with memories of these formative experiences (NC = 20), they offered two critical pieces of insight. The first was that in having spent time working to remove or realign their perspectives to their new identities through the process categorized as phase 2, participants came to see the process as inefficient (NC = 23). Participants expressed that they experienced fatigue and exhaustion by the sheer frequency with which they had to address the incongruence of their new identity across a myriad of settings (social, professional, academic) and environments and, as a result, sought to examine and edit in ways that would be more effective (NC = 23). This editing

required participants to engage in a deeper examination of their perspectives and beliefs. Israel shared:

> It was like *The Matrix*. I was forced to keep looking deeper, and I started to see all the zeros and ones. The situation at work where my boss asked me to explain myself, being angry with my neighbor for asking if I could translate a letter, and not wanting to read in front of people, and the way I targeted certain people—it all came from the same place. Before, I was fixing my attitude and my responses one-by-one. When I would feel the heat come up, I would stop and say, "Okay, let me rethink this so that I don't get heated from this again." But now, when I saw the patterns to get to the source, it was like someone gave me the red pill, and I saw how everything I think and do is connected by the past.

Through these deeper considerations and reflections in their continued work to further align with their new identities, participants identified origin patterns in their now incongruent behaviors and perspectives. These patterns allowed participants to uncover strings of rationales that connected their proclivities toward criminality and violence to narratives of subjugation and limiting beliefs that they had accepted as absolute truths during critical moments in their youth and adolescence (NC = 23).

By using the clustering of patterns as a means of auditing the branches of their logic and rationale for origin, participants coded to this finding came across nexus points that made them increasingly aware of both the generative experiences that resulted in the formation of their underlying assumptions that they, in turn, used to interpret and make sense of the world (NC = 23), as well as how implicit and explicit curricula worked to reify harmful narratives that they may have otherwise addressed sooner (NC = 23).

Most BIPOC interview participants also reported that as a result of their re-engagement of formative experiences, they (a) came to see how negative formative experiences resulted in their adoption of limiting self-concepts (NC = 23); (b) became increasingly aware of the systemic operation of oppression (NC = 23); and (c) arrived at an understanding of how authorities they encountered in their youth operated as actors or agents of institutions that exist

as branches of systemic and institutional oppression (NC = 23). In turn, these newfound understandings led to their combating the conditions of their experience more effectively (NC = 23).

In recalling incidents of re-engaging their formative experiences, BIPOC interview participants also offered that they became cognizant of how the imposition of influences that led to their limited self-concepts occurred before they had an opportunity to develop self-efficacy (NC = 25). Participants identified how specific influences, such as observations of the failure of aspirational models' and peers to overcome shared challenges and limitations, reified beliefs in the futility of subversive action (NC = 25), and they felt emancipation from internalized constraints (NC = 25). Moreover, many of these participants resultantly began to view conditions created by oppressive systems as alterable, acknowledging that willing subjugation is required for oppressive systems to operate (NC = 23).

In terms of this finding, many of the descriptions provided by interview participants revealed that reevaluation of participants' formative experiences, and consideration of their impact, often led to subsequent consideration of how those experiences informed the thinking of others around them (NC = 19). After describing the experience of humiliation and the concern he had that his teachers would see him as a criminal because they saw him arrested, Nathaniel went on to describe the impact he believed his in-school arrest had on his white peers:

> For white kids—seeing Black kids get arrested, watching them get mistreated and seeing that Black people can't fight back, that they can't defend themselves, and that you can mistreat a person of color and take what you want from them, that you don't owe them the respect of a white person or have to be concerned about their health or their safety—that's the lesson they're getting. That [lesson is] they're entitled, and that people of color are not human.

BIPOC interview participants' cognizance of the impact that their formative experience may have had on white peers is of particular importance as some participants utilized this

information to revise their beliefs about the immutability of social and institutional oppression (NC = 19). Recognition of the mechanisms by which prejudice and oppression operate as learned behaviors led to a reduction in the hostility participants felt toward those they saw as taking part in or benefitting from their oppression (NC = 16) and, in many cases, led to a reduction in targeted violence (NC = 10). Participants cited that recognition of a parallel curriculum that informed those who participate as actors in their oppression led to participants seeing some of the actors as victims (NC = 11).

BIPOC interview participants also expressed that coming to an understanding that the oppression and prejudices they experience, while systemic and institutional, result from learned and acculturated behaviors. Partnered with an understanding that their subjugation to oppressive systems is socially constructed, oppressive systems appeared less formidable (NC = 22). Quincy explained insight gained into his oppression as a constructed reality. Specifically, he explained:

> What gives oppression and oppressors power is the power that we give them in our collective minds as a society. If I can take away my belief in the narrative and in the power of these structures, then others can too. I think those benefiting from these systems know that their only strength is that those they subjugate and abuse believe in those systems. That's why they keep us in survival mode and make sure our schools are bad, so that we don't realize that society's operation runs on what we all see as truth. I would love it if the people benefitting from the abuse of people of color would see it's wrong, but I don't need that. (Quincy)

Quincy, in ways similar to other participants, further explained how these realizations influenced his propensity toward criminal violence:

> For a lot of us, like me, what you call criminal violence was an assertion against a representative of abusive power. It was an effort to stop not a single wrong but the entire condition under which people of color are forced to live. The difference is now I'm not criminally violent. I'm not physically violent because I have better ideas for different types of violence because I see the other types of violence that have harmed me. I see the economic violence. I see the media violence. I see the policy violence. So I've learned to fight in ways other than a street fight.
>
> It doesn't mean that those who benefit from my abuse will not be physically violent, but I refuse to fight like an animal. Because the system sees me as property, because it

> sees all people of color as property still, there are other avenues of combat that don't require me to lose my humanity. (Participant 13)

Participants expressed that their engagements in non-violent criminality were attempts to meet the need for essential resources (NC = 30) and that engagements in criminal violence were an attempt to: (a) combat oppressive systems by attacking its representatives and actors (NC =19); (b) subvert the feeling of powerlessness by having physical and psychological power over another individual' (NC = 13); (c) meet essential needs (NC = 28); and/or (d) secure safety (NC = 30).

Regarding how reevaluation of formative experiences altered their reasoning, interview participants stated that their engagement in mining these experiences resulted in viewing physical violence as an ineffective and unacceptable means of reaching the aforementioned outcomes and goals (NC = 23). Their revised perceptions about the effectiveness and necessity of criminal violence were primary examples participants provided as reasons for the need and benefit of re-engaging their formative experiences (NC = 23). A majority of interview participants offered that the re-engagement of the formative experiences of their youth caused them to see where they were victims of violence in ways that they did not previously recognize, and this realization resulted in recalibration toward combating (NC = 17) or opting out of oppressive systems (NC = 9) rather than seeking retribution or gain through the targeting of individuals.

Participants reported that recruiters used unresolved feelings of pain and victimization as a means of influencing them toward criminality (NC = 18). Likewise, persuaders often presented individual targets as the reason for suffering and suggested that attacking these individuals was validated for the long-standing conditions of inequity and abuse (NC = 15). Participants' further

described their conceptual recalibrations as thwarting attempts to persuade them back toward criminality (NC = 23).

Of the 23 participants who described themselves as having engaged in the process of consciously addressing the emotion and perspectives they carried from defining childhood and adolescent experiences, each described this as a necessary step toward combating attempts by others to persuade them toward reentry into criminal activity (NC = 23). Quincy stressed, "When you feel better, you see a longer spectrum of time. You're able to see and think more critically, and you're less open to suggestions that don't serve your long-term interests." Likewise, Frederick noted:

> When I was the one trying to get out, people knew my pain was about the police. They didn't know it was that they my raped sisters in front of me. To try to bring me back, people would bring up the police hurting somebody or somebody hurting kids—to apply that pressure where I hurt. As long as the cut was open, the Big [leader of the gang] was always going to use that to pull me back.

Further explaining how unresolved feelings of pain and experiences of trauma weaponized to recruit individuals into criminality, Frederick continued:

> When I was recruiting, it didn't matter if it was kids or adults, I looked for signs of hurt. I was checking for damage. If you stunk or your clothes were dirty, I targeted you. Because it meant you were alone, no one is caring for you. If you had open cuts or festers, the same thing. If you flinched when I made a loud noise. All those are signs that someone abused you. Things that happened to you made you feel worthless or unsafe. It made you feel like you had to protect yourself because no one else was going to. I just had to figure it out where it started, what broke you. I could put pressure on that hurt to make it so you can't think.
>
> When humans are in pain, we'll take any suggestion for a way to make it stop. If I put a knife in your arm and twisted it, and applied pressure, you're not thinking about it being infected later. You're just willing to do anything to get me to pull it out.

The 23 interview participants included in this finding stressed the critical role that reflective reevaluation of their formative experiences played in their desistance. Participants described this type of reflective engagement as having led them to:

- a more profound understanding of the underlying assumptions and how these assumptions inform their habitual actions and perspectives (NC = 23)
- an altered perception of how these experiences impacted them (NC = 23).

While the mining of formative experiences proved more efficient for revising assumptions and perspectives toward alignment with new self-concepts, this practice led most participants to identify feelings of shame, fear, or anger that they carried from experiences of being framed as being relationally limited, inadequate, or powerless, during youth or adolescence (NC = 25). This identification of residual feelings, in turn, increased some participants' awareness of the need to engage in yet another type of reflective work (NC = 15).

Finding #7: Impact of Youth and Adolescent Experiences in Adult Criminality

Formative youth and adolescent experiences played a significant role in participants' arrival at adult criminality as supported by Finding #7 (30 of 30). While Finding #6 provided evidence on how the influence of authorities, aspirational models, and peers generated formative experiences that led to 25 of 30 interview participants having internalized limiting self-concepts and inhibited self-efficacy (that in turn led to a proclivity toward violence and criminality) interview participants absent from the finding were not immune to the experiences of their youth. Unlike their peers, this subgroup of interview participants described their limiting and harmful self-concepts as generated during adulthood (NC = 5). In contrast to the bleak realities described by the majority's recollection of their youth and adolescent experiences, this subgroup described themselves as having been led to believe that they had natural talents and abilities that would be profitable and afford them a wide array of choice and options for success through adulthood (NC = 5). Participant 9 (Elijah) offered the following description of his youth and adolescent experience:

> I remember being told I could be anything. Every conversation growing up was about how the world was my oyster. There was never a doubt that making money and living a good life. It was really a question of how many ways I was going to be a success. So long as white was right, life was going to be easy. It was for my parents and for everyone like me.

Embedded in Elijah's commentary are other elements reported by members of the subgroup. In like manner, these interview participants described formative moments of their youth as having led to their belief in entitlement to more resources or opportunities than others based on their race, ethnicity, or citizenship (NC = 5) that for the majority of this subgroup was presented as being tied to religious concepts (NC = 5). For example, Participant 30 (Yusuf) shared:

> God made everyone, but he made some people white. The bible talks about angels, and not every angel had the same rank. Color is how God ranks our position in life. If you notice, not everyone is the same color of Black. It is a ranking. You wouldn't give food to a dog and eat his leftovers, but it is fine to let him eat yours. It is the same with Blacks and Latinos. I eat first, and a Latino is lighter than Black, so they eat second, and then a Black is the darkest, so they eat third. It's God's way of bringing order.

Members of this subgroup of interview participants went on to describe recollections of being explicitly taught concepts of racial superiority in spaces such as school, camp, and athletic teams during youth and adolescence (NC = 4). They described their youth as a time of viewing the success of aspirational models and those whom they viewed as their peer group as being examples of their impending success (NC = 5). Participant 19 (Noah) relayed:

> I know things are different now, but when I grew up, movie stars were white. Police officers and firefighters were white. Presidents were white. I knew, because I was white, that my life was going to be bad, it would still be good, I'd still be a lot better off than any Negro.

Having been acculturated into a belief in the guaranteed success and racial superiority, these interview participants arrived at the precipice of adulthood with high levels of efficacy as a result of direct and vicarious success and an expectation that they would be entitled to more than their non-white peers (NC = 5). Thus, as adults, these interview participants encountered

information contrary to their acculturated concepts and socialized beliefs. What resulted was disorientation, which led to a lowered efficacy and questioning of their self-concepts (NC = 5). Descriptions by this participant group identified their disorientation as having occurred in response to two distinct occurrences. The first was seeing individuals they viewed as inferior to themselves progress beyond them in education (NC = 2), and the second was the result of seeing individuals whom they viewed as inferior to themselves progress beyond them in financial achievement (NC = 5). Commenting on his experience of disorientation, Elijah went on to say:

> When people say, they peaked in high school, what that means is that you were set up for failure. My teachers, my family, my friends, we all charged into senior year talking about all the things we were going to do and see. Then, I watched everyone else go to college… I remember not getting into college and seeing the minority kids get into big colleges and getting office jobs, and I never felt so low. I felt like I didn't know who I was and that everyone had lied to me about my value.
>
> I hadn't studied at any point in high school, and I remember my parents taking me to throw eggs at the houses of a Black kid and an Indian kid because "they used affirmative action to take my rightful place." We lit one of the kid's houses on fire, and we knew there was nothing they could do about it. The police weren't going to do anything about it, and I could have easily gotten the whole town to kill them.

Each interview participant within this subgroup articulated that—while they engaged in criminal actions before they transitioned to adulthood—the intentionality and violence that differentiated their youthful missteps and criminality was a result of disorientation and loss of efficacy experienced in the transition into adulthood (NC = 5). These same participants described a cascading adoption of limiting self-beliefs that caused them to perceive a reduced number of options as viable and view success in endeavors outside of criminality as unlikely (NC = 5). Feelings of shame, fear, and anger emerged as a result of their self-perceived limitations (NC =5).

The majority of interview participants and members of the subgroup who did not have formative experiences that led to constructing their limiting self-concepts had distinctly different experiences during youth and adolescence. Nevertheless, the study offers evidence that while

these groups operated in polar efficacies (on opposite ends of a spectrum) and experienced the adoption of limiting self-concepts at different developmental stages, reduction of options and low self-efficacy played a significant role in interview participants' entry into criminality was influenced by their youth and adolescent experiences.

Finding #8: Role of Reflection on Somatic Responses

Finding #8 provided evidence that reflection on somatic responses in preparation for moments of stress was integral to participants' efforts to remain desistant from criminality (28 of 30). A majority of interview participants described the use of reflection to prepare somatic responses, stressing this as a crucial step in remaining desistant. While some participants described this reflection process as learning to eliminate or suppress bodily responses (NC = 10), most described the result of their reflection as the ability to disregard somatic responses when cognizance of the response would lead to engagement in reactionary behaviors (NC = 24).

Some interview participants explained that these responses were not happenstance occurrences but rather, efforts by gangs to weaponize and condition responses of violence to specific stimuli (NC = 8). Daniel explained:

> They trained my body to respond. They tied me up and kept showing me pictures of my dead friends, bleeding and dead. They kept me tied up sometimes for 72 hours and made me yell out who the enemy was. And if I looked nervous or hesitated, they slapped me and told me they were training me to be hard. Even things like, if I ever smiled, they would slap me to make me a soldier. Then the anger, when you see a target or an enemy, your body takes over. Even if it's something you don't want to do, your body doesn't care—because now you're nervous, because you don't want to do it. And this person has now made you nervous, and your body connects that person as making you nervous and all the pain you felt before.

In their descriptions, participants talked about somatic responses as having prevented them from accessing their ability to reason (NC = 28). Some expressed that during instances in which they experienced somatic responses to stress, they felt as if they were acting against their will (NC = 8). Elijah divulged:

> That Eminem song from 8 mile, "knees is weak, palms are sweaty." As soon as my palms got sweaty, I knew that I was in trouble. That's when the alter ego would come out. Everything I talked to the therapist about, it would click out the window. I would just see red, and it was like someone else would take over.

Christopher shared:

> When the police siren went off, I knew I was better off staying in the car. The sirens triggered me. It was like someone pushed a button. My arms got swole, and I could feel my back get tense, and everything I knew went out the window. I had to really think about why the siren gave me that reaction. It's almost like a signal to get ready for violence, and my body knew it. It would take over.

Across interviews, there were two distinct categories of triggers for somatic responses. The first was reminders of direct experiences of injury or witnessed harm. This trigger included the presence of police involving direct and/or personally witnessed prior interactions with law enforcement (NC = 25) and somatic responses triggered by similarity of circumstances to occurrences in which they experienced or witnessed harm that was unrelated to (past or present) interactions with law enforcement (NC = 16). David provided an example:

> There were certain phrases that would remind me of my father beating me and my mother. Hearing any phrase that my father used from someone else, I could feel the same pains in my body as when I watched him. My chest gets tight. And the person I'm looking at, I don't see them, I see my father. Every time I stabbed that guard, I was stabbing my father. He didn't deserve that. You can't live in society when you're wired like that.

Frederick provided another example:

> Every time, if I was in a crowd that's leaving someplace—even in a church or a flea market or a train station—it reminds me of being outside the club. I hear the shots and the shooter and his friends laughing. What it felt to hold my girlfriend while she was bleeding and struggling to breathe, that comes back like I'm there again. She bled out of her head, and all of the sadness and anger, it comes back. When it happens, my heart hurts, my chest hurts like I'm living it again, and then everyone becomes an enemy, any little thing, and I see you as a big threat.

The second trigger of somatic response involved reminders of experiences that interview participants only had traceable knowledge of through media or word of mouth. Descriptions of

this second trigger included experiences of harm that had come to family members (often passed down as warning by other members of the family; NC = 16). Henry commented:

> When I first saw pictures of white people lynching Black people in the middle of their picnics and saw all the white people smiling, and it wasn't just bad guys—it was women and men and children—my mother was telling me that lynched man was my grandfather. She told me that I had to be fast and look for exits any time I walked into a diner. She told me I had to be home before the streetlights came on. She told me I had to avoid certain neighborhoods. And when I asked her if I could run to a police officer for help, she told me they were the ones I had to run from the most.
>
> The tension I feel in a white space hasn't changed. The tension that caused me to lash out if I felt I could be cornered hasn't changed—or even seeing one or two white folk at night hasn't changed. What changed is that I can talk myself down now. I know that when I get that feeling, I'm not thinking, so I take a deep breath and force myself to be brave enough to not strike first, and I wait for whoever it is to show me who they are. When I calm my body down, I can rationalize that they're just people and may not want to hurt me.

Descriptions of the second category of triggers also included reminders of stories and images in which interview participants saw harm come to individuals similar to themselves at the hands of members of an organized non-racial, non-ethnic, now-law enforcement group (NC = 4); a group of a particular race or ethnicity (NC = 25); an individual of specific race or ethnicity (NC = 5); or law enforcement (NC = 25). Quincy detailed:

> From seeing Emmett Till to Sean Bell, all the images of black people being killed—over and over by police—on the television and in the newspaper taught me very quickly who to be afraid of. Seeing their R.I.P. candles lit in my hood like they were from my block, and sometimes they were. It taught me it could be me. And not just that it could, that it would probably be—if not this time, then another—because it would happen to most of us.
>
> That fear lives in me, so the presence of police means my humanity is shrinking. The longer they're present, the more my body is on edge, my hands swell, my jaw gets tight, my body automatically knows there's danger, and all my mental resources are being used because my body is going into protection.

White interview participants were the only participants who indicated that it was common for them to experience somatic responses at seeing a similarity in an individual's race or ethnicity to assailants in stories they'd heard or read, or images they'd seen in movies or on television (NC = 5). Noah admitted:

> I'm never going to be comfortable with Black people. I don't know if you're Black-Black. You look a little Mexican, and your name sounds Indian, but if you were going to be here, or I was going to see you, I would've brought my gun with me. I can't tell the good Blacks from the bad ones, so I have to assume that you're one of the bad ones. In case you're one of the bad ones I've heard about, when I see a Black, my wrist sweats, and my trigger finger twitches. That lets me know I'll be faster than any trouble.

A majority of overall interview participants described somatic triggers as resulting in their physical bodies preparing to engage in violence (NC = 24) and a need to engage in intentional suppression or the disregarding of bodily responses to engage in thinking and reasoning during moments of high stress (NC = 28).

When asked about how they suppressed or disregarded their physiological responses, most participants described themselves as having engaged in imagined experiences in which they found themselves in situations of being triggered by the aforementioned stressors (NC = 24). Participants also described themselves as having rehearsed or coached themselves to engage in activities such a box breathing (NC = 3), purposeful hesitation or stillness (NC = 2), positive self-talk (NC = 22), and planning for the recollection of action plans during their imagined experiences in hopes of drawing upon the same strategies during moments of threat or high stress (NC = 15).

Quincy explained his process of engaging in intentional suppression of somatic responses to engage in thinking and reasoning during moments of high stress and the conscious reallocation of cognitive resources that he engages in order to access his developed reasoning abilities:

> I slow my body down, and by slowing down, breathing slowly, I'm cooling my body, letting my muscles get loose, and I'm usually not giving attention to anything else. I just focus on getting my body to relax, and all the energy that my body was taking goes back to my mind. [long pause] It's always zero-sum. What energy my body is not using, my mind has available. (Quincy)

In company with Quincy, most of the participants coded to this finding described their ability to reallocate cognitive resources as requiring their preemptive engagement in cognitive

experiencing or imagining scenarios likely to trigger somatic responses (NC = 20). Participants further described the use of these imagined scenarios as being a means of navigating external stimuli by gaining comfort in their discomfort (NC = 16), and creating scenarios they could draw on as a means of accounting for unencountered variables that emerged as possibilities (NC = 15). Participant 16 (Mark) specified:

> Imagining how to respond to issues is a lot like a performer rehearsing. The more prepared I felt, the easier it was to deal with curveballs. The rehearsal gets you comfortable with the idea of being uncomfortable. That prevents me from reacting out of discomfort. I can ignore my heart racing and the sweating and remind myself to use my brain.

Israel acknowledged:

> The one I keep trying to figure out is what to do when I get pulled over, I've never been pulled over because I don't drive. But when I watch the cops shoot Black drivers, I watch to see what not to do. I know not to reach for my wallet. I know not to leave the car on. I know to turn on the interior lights so they can see me. And I know that they'll probably shoot me, so if I'm ever pulled over, I'll be fucked up and stressed with capital letters, but I'll be able to think because I already know a lot of what to do and not do. There's no one right answer, I'll have to evaluate the moment.

Participant 23 (Roland) revealed:

> The most important part about imagining what could happen for me, is I learn how I would feel and why. *Entonce* [Then], I can think about what the other guy is thinking and that might save my life. I'm not just gonna fight or act crazy cuz I'm scared, I'm really goin to be able to stop and think because I know why my body is reacting, I can focus on what the other person needs to feel safe to keep me safe. I know that they're probably reacting to what their body is doing and not thinking. I got to talk them down to be reasonable and *no como un animal* [not like an animal], *actuando por instinto* [acting in instinct].

Of note is that when asked if increased exposure to groups or individuals whom they perceived as threat impacted their ability to either better manage somatic responses or resulted in their seeing groups or individuals as less of a threat, interview participants unanimously responded that it did not (NC = 30). Instead, participants credited their management of somatic

responses as being connected to the efficacy gained through experiences of non-desistance related success (NC = 21)

Finding #9: Critical Learning During the Desistance Process

In finding #9, participants described themselves as having become a new or different individual due to critical learning that occurred during the desistance process (30 of 30). The first finding of this research is that participants' successes in endeavors separate from desistance and led to changes in self-concept. The second finding provided insight into how self-concept changes led participants to examine resulting changes in their needs, values, and perspectives. Finding 3 provides insight into what participants offer as evidence of their having taken on entirely new identities due to the desistance process.

Evidence that participants provided as proof of their assertion that they are now new or different individuals fell into five categories:

- **category 1:** observations and expressions offered by others (i.e., observations of participants by others that have been shared directly with them or with others; NC = 28);
- **category 2:** increased cognizance and consideration of future outcomes (i.e., increased ability to consider future consequences and benefits; NC = 28);
- **category 3:** increased concern and consideration for others (i.e., their feelings and well-being; NC = 6);
- **category 4:** shift or change in perceived needs (NC = 11); and
- **category 5:** adoption of information searching practices (NC = 25).

Category 1: Observations and Expressions Offered by Others. Most interview participants described themselves as now being new or different people due to the learnings they

gathered in the process of desistance pointed to the observations and expression of others as a source of evidence (NC = 28). Christopher recounted:

> Eventually, they stopped asking me to roll through. Cats [people] would be like, 'You're really different—on God.' A few school brothers [people the participant had grown up with] were tight, but most were low-key happy. With a lot of them, we had like a little funeral for the old me. We drank and ate one last time because they knew the guy they knew wasn't coming back.

Nathaniel commented:

> It was my Bartender and my Barber, of all people, who saw the difference and said something. They both told me that they noticed that the things I was saying were more positive and that my face looked different. My Barber even said that it was like I went to college.

Caleb shared this example:

> People like to ask me advice. Before, everyone knew not to ask, because everyone knew me as a guy who makes bad decisions to mess up his future. When people call me, it was because they need backup to do something crazy or sometimes people just wanted to see me do something crazy so they could see a show. Even what people call me now is different. Nobody calls me by my old name, even hood gente [people] call me *Sabio* [wise] now. (Caleb)

Category 2: Increased Cognizance and Consideration of Future Outcomes. While throughout the interview, participants discussed their navigation toward being able to consider longer-term benefits and consequences, each of the interview participants coded into category 2 of this finding offered that the practice of considering future consequences and benefits permeated into other aspects of their lives and became common practices for them (NC = 28). Quincy explained:

> The old me could see this far [creates a distance of approximately 3 inches between to his index fingers]. The new me sees this far [extends both fingers to create a space of approximately a foot]. You see, I went forward and back because I consider more of the past now and see more of how little actions now can alter the future. And when I was learning to think further, it was on purpose.
>
> The man that I am now, it's automatic, and it's different because before, I could do it when things were calm, and I had to stop and purposely go there. Now, I don't have to be calm as much, I can be mad or upset, and I already know to stop and think about how I got there and what my long-term goal is. I see it even if I'm washing dishes, I think about

where I put them. I used to just put them on the rack, but now I think about placement and if they might fall or break. It may seem small, but it isn't.

Frederick commented:

> I think the wildest thing for me was that people I knew since day one didn't really even recognize me. When I would say waddup, they would squint. Even people who wanted smoke [were in search of fight] with me, they were never really sure if they had the right guy, so they would leave it alone. When you learn what you need to have a greater field of vision, you move differently. Even if you see a threat, now I think about how to address that threat while thinking about how it will impact other parts of my life.

Category 3: Increased Concern and Consideration for Others. Participants expressed that their perceived increase in caring for others' welfare, including individuals with whom they were unfamiliar, served as evidence of their being new or different (NC = 6). Christopher described:

> You remember earlier, I talked about wanting to give the bodega man money because he had gotten robbed. I thought about him and his kids—I don't even know if that man has kids! And I remember that shocked me! After that, it would happen more and more. This morning, I saw the amazon guy with packages tipping over, and I went to help him straighten his cart up. I could tell he was nervous that I was going to take a package. The old me would've been like, 'Now I'm going to take your shit for real' but instead I was like *calmate* [relax], I got you, I don't steal. And I helped him.

According to Daniel:

> Now when I see teenagers and young men on the train who are angry the way I was, I worry about them, and I try to tell them what I've learned. Anger is really blinding and without your basic necessities met, you're going to be angry. Not just angry, but in chaos, your systems are going haywire. You can't even think how to get those necessities met because you're angry. And the system doesn't let up. It keeps hitting you even when it already has you all the way down. And now, when I see these youngbloods [young people] I tell them what I went through because I want them to not go through it. Especially when I see fights, I always get in the middle—I never did that before.
>
> A lot of people like to say, "it ain't worth it" but it is worth it if you don't see other options, so I just lay out the options. I tell them what they're gonna miss out on. I don't try to scare them because their needs are valid, their feelings are valid, and—with the limited information they're looking at, their actions are valid. That's their truth that they're in.
>
> The me now is different. This guy knows that truth is relative to the options and information you have—and even to your pressures.

Category 4: Shift or Change in Perceived Needs. For interview participants who perceived their shift or change in needs as evidence of their being new or different (NC = 11), their reasoning was their perception of a direct connection between their identity and their needs. Phillip described how cognizance of his changes in need caused him to view himself as different by saying:

> A family dog and a wild dog both eat the same food groups. They have a need for grains and proteins. Once the dog is no longer in the threat of the wilderness, there are things he doesn't need to do. He or she doesn't need to hunt or fight. Even when you rescue a dog, you see that their personality changes, the same dog who wanted to bite everyone because he had a need to protect himself is now showing you kinder qualities—gentleness even. People, I think, have a lot more needs because we're more complex. But the principle is the same, when our needs change, it allows us to live in parts of who we can be—and once we're living and in the flesh who we could be, then we're someone different than we were before.

Category 5: Adoption of Information Searching Practices. Interview participants offered their newly adopted information searching practices as evidence of their being new or different (NC = 25). Embedded within each of the participants statements in this category of this finding are articulations connected to having adopted a perspective that there usually is information beyond what is known that will be of assistance in assessing situations, in increasing the likelihood of desired outcomes, and reappraising one's own ability in the interest of greater accuracy. Samuel described:

> My mind does a great job of telling me what it thinks is not possible. It does a great job of telling me to protect myself and tells me to prepare for the worst thing as aggressively as I can. Where I know I'm different now is I know I'm workin' with limited intel. Especially when something feels hard, I look at someone else and say, "What skill do they have that I don't?" and I start researching that skill.
>
> The old me thought that everything was already in my headlight. Now I know that there is a lot in the peripheral that I don't know. So now I remember to slow down to see what else is influencing my situation, and it gives me a better idea of what I can and can't do.

Oscar elucidated:

> It's that step back I talked about earlier. Who we are is just our character's response to

> what we see. I see more now, I can literally turn off what is distracting to really take a look at what is going on. If I'm dealing with a personal issue, I'm not also thinking about work, I'm delving deeper into my focus on that issue and asking questions to see what I don't know so that I can go and investigate it.
>
> Before I was trying to respond to everything at once because everything was equally loud. I had no choice. But now that I can select things, I can be like, "Oh, I should find out more from … about how so-and-so feels about … or find out what made so-and-so act like that. I should ask them about their perspective" because that's going to affect the outcome of the situation as much as how I feel, and once I know how they feel, I can check and see what I can do that would be most beneficial to me and maybe even them.

When asked as a follow-up to their commentary on the specific categories of evidence of newness and change they provided, how they learned to desist, and whether there were influencers who acted as models for their desistance, most interview participants described what they saw as the importance of a praxis based approach (NC = 28) with none articulating a model as having been of enduring or considerable importance (NC = 0). In describing a continuous cycle of reflection and action, participants recounted their reflection as being decentered from considerations of their feelings. Instead, their reflections' focus paralleled categories 2, 3, and 4 of evidence of change that appeared earlier in this section. Among the topics of reflection described were considerations of future personal consequences (NC = 12), opportunity costs (NC = 18), and the benefits of specific courses of action or response (NC = 28); the impact of their actions on others (NC = 15); and unknown factors and ways to gather relevant information (NC = 19). When asked where, or from whom, they learned to reflect, some participants indicated that reflection was a natural occurrence (NC = 14) and that engagement in reflection was a natural effect of having opportunities to engage in abstract thinking. In trying to describe the factors that led to their engaging in reflective practices, some participants, such as Victor, posited that harm or hurt served as motivators or catalyst toward reflection (NC = 15)

> If you're a kid, right, and you touch the stove. You don't need someone else to tell you to think about how that hurt and that it's hot and that you shouldn't touch it again. it's the same thing. If you're hurting, you don't ever get used to hurting, so as soon as you get the space to think, you're going to think about the lesson. But back to what I was

> saying before about mental space, if someone is holding your hand down on the stove, you're not in your head having all this advanced thinking, all your energy is going to your body to fight and get the person off of you. (Victor)

Other participants, such a Samuel, posited that love (without the complement of harm or hurt) was a primary catalyst toward engagement in reflective practice (NC = 17):

> I always thought that getting too lost in the head was women's work. Like sure, reflection is natural when you want to be better at stuff, but what we're talking about today [long pause]. The throttle for that was really how I feel about my son. I started reflecting and thinking about change because I was motivated to make things better for him. I think you do that when you love somebody. You think about things you wouldn't otherwise bother with. And if you're going to ask what was different, because I've got a feel for how you ask these things now, my love for my son made me want more for him—he's got a nice life, but I wanted him to have an even better one —and no one else was going to give him more, so it fell on me to do some thinking. (Samuel)

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with a review of the research questions explored in the study and a brief overview of the study's nine primary findings. What followed was a discussion of findings led by responses and "thick description" (Denzin, 2001; Geertz, 1973) offered by a wide range of participants. Throughout the findings chapter, illustrative quotations from interview transcripts portrayed trends that emerged in participants' perspectives and captured some of the subject matter's richness and complexity. This chapter summary provides an overview of findings and a notation of their alignment to specific research questions to allow the reader an opportunity to be succinctly briefed on correspondences.

Finding #1: Resource insecurity and preoccupation with threat were common barriers to desistance (30 of 30). Despite having a plethora of unique experiences, perspectives, and self-concepts, resource insecurity and concerns about the presence of threats, described by interview participants as exponentially increasing upon release from incarceration, occupied the cognitive resources the interview participants collectively pointed to as necessary for desistance. With viable options for resource attainment progressively reducing stage of offense, participants

reported that in addition to the threat of violence and lack of access to essential resources, they also found themselves having to navigate stigma, lowered self-efficacy, increased competition for limited resources, and a reduction of opportunities at each stage from offense to release.

Finding #2: Success in endeavors separate from the goal of avoiding criminality were generalizable and led to reflection and changes in self-concept (30 of 30). Interview participants' feelings of success and efficacy gained from direct success in endeavors separate from desistance were transferable and often resulted in developing a new or adjusted self-concept. Moreover, most participants felt that their success, efficacy, and adoption of new self-concepts caused them to see an increased number of options as viable. This increase in options often led to intolerance of options that participants previously engaged with and saw as viable.

Finding #3: Changes in self-concept led participants to reflect on resulting changes in their needs, values, and perspectives (30 of 30). Interview participants described their shift in self-concept as the cause for their deviation from a previous living style centered around their fight for essential resources. Participants' expressions depicted their engagement in a purposeful process of reflecting on, re-assessing, or re-prioritizing their needs based on their adoption of a new identity and the reappraisal of identity attributes that participants came to see as incompatible. Embedded in this response were articulations of participants who related that they ceased needing drugs mainly because of perspective gained through their engagement with their new or refined intersections of identity and self-concept.

Finding #4: While verbal persuasion had a significant impact on participants, participant perception of the providers' motivation was a determiner of whether verbal persuasion acted as a support or hindrance (30 of 30). Verbal persuasion that influenced interview participants toward increased desire to, or belief that they could, desist from criminality were not directly related to

the topic of desistance from criminality. Instead, when it came to verbal persuasion, this mode of influence was most effective in instances in which the persuader not only did not discuss desistance but had no knowledge of the participant's criminal history. Participants generally saw verbal persuasion of their ability or talent as generating an outlook or perspective of having options beyond those they previously conceived as possible due to being convinced that they had a talent or gift that they were previously unaware of or under-utilizing. Moreover, participants saw persuaders who were knowledgeable of their criminal history, or who they did not view as an authority or expert on the subject they were commenting on, as unreliable advisors or evaluators. As a result, individuals who were mandated to interact with participants as part of their professional duty and family members were often seen as well-meaning but were ineffective in their attempts at verbal persuasion. Overall, participants felt neutral about others' attempts to persuade them back toward criminal lifestyles due to their seeing these persuaders as not being able to offer insight into the endeavors participants were now taking on.

Finding #5: Participants viewed their desistance as having been separate from occurrences in which they may have appeared to be desistant under custody (30 of 30). Interview participants saw a difference between the motivations and the resulting temporary nature of discontinuance or cessation of criminality and the motivations and permanence of desistance. Participants described themselves as having engaged in temporary discontinuance or cessation of criminality with outward appearance as a central motivator and differentiated these events from desistance. When asked about the motivation for temporary versus permanent abstinence from criminality, participants explained that the motivation for temporary cessation was a desire to influence the manners in which others saw them for reasons of immediate benefit such as safety, protection, or reward.

Moreover, participants articulated that while the realities of custody resulted in their engaging in a temporary deferral of criminal action, those same realities prevented participants from accessing the reflective space needed for desistance by occupying their mental space with considerations of immediate and ongoing threats to their safety. This finding then closes with a consideration of how policies that limit the movements of individuals post-incarceration by requiring they remain in the same physical jurisdiction under which they were engaged in criminal activity often leads to their being in proximity to a plethora of threats that may have been otherwise avoidable if released individuals could relocate. Participants described how policies that forcibly returned and required them to remain in their neighborhoods inherently made it more difficult for them to engage in the reflective process of desistance—even after release—due to an extension and exponential increase of threats to their basic welfare.

Finding #6: Desistance required a reconsideration of early, repeated, and internalized experiences that they attributed as having led to the adoption of limiting self-beliefs and a view of incarceration as inevitable or deserved (23 of 30). A demographic outlier, this finding was the only coded response that belonged strictly to interview participants of color. There were zero indicators of this finding in the interviews provided by white participants, and a majority of BIPOC interview participants gave support of this finding. In supporting this finding through articulations of their experience, each participant of color described experiences centered on interactions with authorities in school settings or on experiences of interaction with police.

Most participants described themselves as having needed to purposefully engage in the process of consciously addressing, and in some cases reappraising, the emotion and perspectives they carried from defining childhood and adolescent experiences that they see as having resulted in their carrying limiting beliefs of their adequacy and power. There was a shared recognition

among commenting participants that while these experiences were not sole reasons for the decision to engage in criminality. Nevertheless, each commenter expressed that the practice of purposeful engagement and reappraisal of these experiences, which participants saw as influential toward their adoption of limiting self-concepts, was a necessary step toward making themselves insusceptible to tactics used by those seeking to steer or persuade them back toward criminality.

Finding #7: Formative youth and adolescent experiences played a significant role in participants' arrival at adult criminality (30 of 30). Interview participants were divided into majority and minority groups when it came to the efficacy they held from formative experiences and acculturation. While the majority experienced the development of limiting self-concepts and the minority experienced high efficacy that resulted in their later disorientation, each of the participants' formative experiences traceably impacted their arrival at the perception of their having reduced options and low self-efficacy, albeit at different stages of life.

Finding #8: Reflection on somatic responses in preparation for moments of stress was integral to participants' efforts to remain desistant from criminality (28 of 30). Interview participants described reflection on somatic responses to stress as being integral to their efforts to remain desistant. Participants described the results of their reflection on their somatic responses as having served at least one of two crucial goals. The first was to eliminate or suppress bodily responses, and the second was to disregard somatic responses in cases where cognizance of these responses would have led participants to engage in reactionary behaviors and actions.

Participants cited these somatic responses to stress as having two triggers. The first was reminders of experiences in which they experienced harm. The second trigger was a similarity in perceived circumstances to occurrences that individuals only knew through the media or word of

mouth. This second trigger splits between experiences of harm that had come to family members (often passed down as warning by other members of the family) and experiences in which participants' saw individuals that they viewed as having similar phenotype to themselves murdered by particular and identifiable groups such as gangs, members of a specific race, or members of police forces. Of the 28 participants whose responses coded into this finding, each described their need to engage in intentional suppression or disregarding bodily responses to engage in thinking and reasoning during moments of high stress.

Finding #9: Participants described themselves as having become a new or different individual due to critical learning that occurred during the desistance process (30 of 30). Interview participants' evidence of this assertion fell into five categories: observations and expressions offered by others; an increased cognizance of, and ability to consider, future consequences and benefits; an increase in concern and consideration toward the feelings and well-being of others; a shift or change in perceived needs; adoption of information searching practices.

With these categories of evidence, the section also provided findings regarding reflection. With most interview participants having underscored the importance of reflection through commentary in which they described their having engaged in continuous praxis, the section provided a disaggregation of the concepts that participants felt were the most necessary to focus on, which included opportunity costs, the impact of their actions on the well-being of others, and adoption of information searching practices. The section then closed with findings regarding the origins of their reflective practice and an inquiry into how interview participants learned to reflect. Some indicated that reflection was a natural occurrence and that engagement in reflection was a natural effect of having the opportunities and mental resources necessary to engage in

abstract thinking. Others described harm and hurt, or love, as being motivators and catalysts of their reflective practice.

CHAPTER VI: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this naturalistic field inquiry was to gain a greater understanding of the occurrence of transformative learning within the context of desistance from criminality, as it occurred for a sample group of 30 individuals formerly incarcerated for violent offenses in New York State. In undertaking a qualitative study grounded in participants' offering their emic perspectives of the learning experiences concerning their desistance process, I sought insights that might assist individuals and organizations seeking to combat recidivism. Included in the intended beneficiaries of these insights are any individuals or organizations seeking to ignite or support others in the process of desisting from criminality and anyone seeking insight that can help form innovative methods of reducing the impact of influences and experiences that have led many to criminal violence and incarceration.

With elements of case study applied, this presentation of research results from data collected through in-depth interviews of 30 participants who, in addition to meeting the study's criteria for participation (which included having been involved and desisted from violent criminality), ranged in age from 25 to 47. The previous chapter (V) presented this study's findings by organizing data from participants' interviews into categories to produce an objective and readable narrative. The purpose of this chapter (VI) is to provide an interpretation of the findings and insights described previously.

With the findings of this study being a disaggregated view of what interview participants holistic experiences, in which the iterative process of learning and adjustment played a role in their development and transformation, I gave extensive consideration toward how to compose this analysis best.

Because the articulations offered by interview participants aligned to distinct collective experiences that participants presented with the attributes of a phasic process, this chapter presents a portion of its content in a similar fashion. The organization of this chapter begins with a guided consideration of the barriers and challenges to transformative learning and desistance that emerged in participants' descriptions of their experiences. Next is an examination and analysis of the insights that emerge from an application of the respective transformative learning lenses provided by Mezirow (2000), Cranton (2016), and Nerstrom (2014). Then, the chapter provides analytic categories correlative to critical incidents that emerged from a cross-case analysis of this research in the same chronology of experience that participants offered. In taking this approach, the goal was to generate an analysis that offered a nuanced interpretation of the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

While each of the interview participants described their conceptual engagement in violence and criminality as beginning with reducing their options and efficacy (NC = 30), there is a significant split in when and how this occurred. For interview participants in this study, this split occurred across demographic lines. Both BIPOC interview participants and white interview participants reached conceptual engagements in violence and criminality, albeit during different life stages and through different means. However, as the primary demographic of both this study and New York State's carceral system is BIPOC, their representation of experience is likely, to a degree, applicable to any number of individuals who experience discrimination and prejudice as a member of a group that is made to feel marginalized by their environments and the actors within them. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that the experiences of this study's five white interview participants are generalizable to white individuals beyond the recognition that whiteness affords a luxury of experience. The evidence offered by this study suggests that the

experiences of white individuals within the United States are comparatively more just, less dangerous, and a more opportune set of experiences than those afforded to BIPOC. However, this study provided evidence that there remain conditions under which white individuals may experience a non-comparable but still relevant form of oppression at any age. A consideration of this research's findings revealed that participants across demographics underwent similar desistance processes, with three of four emergent phases recounted across each of the represented demographic categories. Thus, in writing this analysis, I intended to distill an understanding of the desistance process by considering the experiences that emerged from the sample as a whole, focusing on the impact of demography at points where it was most relevant.

Analytic Category I: Challenges to the Transformative Learning and Desistance Process

While this research responds to Cranton's question of whether those who are "completely oppressed" (Cranton, 2016, p. 6) can participate in the process of transformative learning, the response may not be as straightforward as a simple yes or no. In reviewing interview participants' experiences in service to understanding what barriers and challenges they overcame to arrive at transformative learning and desistance, it is easy to argue that participants are representative of some of the most oppressed groups in American society. Based on interview descriptions, most participants existed in a state of dominating oppression from youth until the occurrence of the experiences that began their individual desistance journeys (NC = 25). The successes that these participants encountered as desistance initiating experiences, and the resultant presentation of options, provided them with the space needed to engage in transformative learning—potentially moving participants from a state of total oppression to near-total oppression. In that window of space that rests between total and near-total oppression, participants seemed to have had room to be presented with alternate self-concepts or identities

and a pathway to further emancipation. While Cranton's question may go unanswered because of an ambiguity in the use of the term "completely oppressed," what is at the root of her question is not lost. Like Mezirow (2000), Cranton (2016) recognized that individuals living in the realities of extreme social conditions, impoverishment, and resource insecurity are less likely to participate in transformative learning due to their allocation of cognitive resources being wholly toward their present-moment survival. These etic offerings by the theorists are substantiated in the emic perspectives offered by participants. Central to understanding the barriers and challenges to participants' transformative learning is understanding how they came to see their limiting conditions of their lives as immutable.

With most participants in this study having pointed to the significant role of authority figures, such as teachers and police officers, in what most interview participants described as defining interactions that generated long-standing perceptions of themselves as generally inadequate and powerless to succeed in endeavors other than criminality—Bandura's (1997) text is assistive.

Explaining the manners in which verbal persuasion and allied types of social influences impact individual beliefs regarding specific capabilities, Bandura (1997) underscores the notable role that perceived knowledgeability and credibility of the appraiser play in an individual's receipt of external appraisal. Bandura explained that appraisals offered by significant models in people's lives, by virtue of their being given more credence, often have an increased and lasting effect on the recipient's appraising of their own capability. With most defining experiences interview participants offered as formative initiators of their criminality having occurred during youth and adolescence, most interview participants likely had only a limited knowledge of their talents and capacities due to inexperience. It is also conceivable that these participants lacked

knowledge of what indicants would have assisted them in making an accurate appraisal. This lack of experience and knowledge partnered with the influence of authority figures who rooted their presentation of these participants' limited future outcomes as being tied to static attributes (i.e., academic talent, phenotype, social status, race), meant that these participants were prone to accept the inhibiting and prescriptive outcomes offered by their appraisers. Per participant's offerings, this understandably resulted in adopting limiting perspectives as core self-concepts that grew into deeply entrenched assumptions of limitation (NC = 25). For the majority of interview participants, limiting self-concepts were reified by observation of, and socialization with, similarly situated peers. It is likely that during these referential assessments that these participants concluded assessments of their conditional and general efficacies as limited to be accurate and, in most cases, came to perceive the conditions of their lives as immutable (Festinger, 1954; Goethals & Darley, 1977; Suls & Miller, 1977). Bandura's 1997 text offered further perspective on the mechanism of influence that was likely the vehicle for participants' appraisals of their peers' operation and others they saw as sharing their static attributes. Bandura's work also offered insight into how these influences resulted in the concretization of limiting self-concepts and participants' acceptance of harmful and inequitable conditions of experience as an unalterable reality.

Regarding vicarious experiences—defined earlier as experiences that alter efficacy beliefs through the transmission of competencies from, and in comparison to, the attainment—Bandura wrote about two relevant types of appraisal. The first is a referential assessment of ourselves to those we see as being of the same ability. The second is a referential assessment of those we see as better equipped for the assessment goal due to their having relevant attributes or talents that we view as superior to our own. In referring back to the explanations offered by

Gilbert and Waldo regarding how their observations of others influenced them, there is evidence of both the aforementioned modalities of vicarious influence. Gilbert recalled:

> The men and boys around me, as young as ten were all drinking alcohol and more to escape this reality. I watched males stronger and smarter than me get their heads bashed by police or drunk and bashing each other, and saw white men comes and kidnap girls and load them onto U-hauls—so without anyone having to explicitly tell me, I knew what these authorities claimed to be true—there would be no escaping.

Similarly, Waldo recounted:

> By five years old, I knew I was going to be in the system. I'd seen it take my brothers, my neighbors, fathers. I saw it cut down hard-working men, educated men, men who'd gone to school and had a better shot than anybody—I saw the system eat them alive.
>
> Now imagine, you had every authority figure in your life tell you that you ain't shit when you're small. And when you're small, you believe authority figures because you're trained too. And now imagine it happened to all the other Black boys around you, so now you're getting the word from each other. Then add that the people who looked like me were the ones jailed on the TV.
>
> Even when I had enough money to see a movie growing up, or even now, the people who look like us are the villains, the incarcerated, the drug addicts, the lowest rung of our society. In whose imagination are Black and Brown men free in America? What the hell else was I supposed to think or believe when this one truth was all I was given?

The excerpted statements that were provided by Gilbert and Waldo offer examples of the first modality of vicarious influence, in which participants assessed their circumstances through an appraisal of their comparative standing. In Gilbert's recollection, "Boys around me, as young as ten were all drinking alcohol, and more to escape this reality" and Waldo's depiction, "Now imagine it happened to all the other Black boys around you, so now you're getting the word from each other" are suggestions of implied cognizance. In each case, this cognizance results from participants making observations of their peers that, in turn, teaches them that the social conditions and challenges they faced were not limited to their personal experience. Participants' expressions tie well with two key assertions made by Bandura (1997).

The first is that individuals with limited experience evaluate their capabilities based on a comparative analysis of the challenges and outcomes of others whom they see as similar to

themselves (Takata & Takata, 1976). The second is that individuals use an aggregate of their conclusions and correlations as indicators of the probability distribution for success across variable categories of perceived similarities (Bandura & Jourden, 1991; Wood, 1989). It is probable that as participants observed others whom they viewed as similar but different from them in academic preparation, performance achievement, and/or access to resources (material or otherwise), that the perceived recurrence of limiting conditions (or limited options) across experiences would have eliminated any opportunity for efficacy. Participants may have otherwise generated efficacy under the pretense that they could overcome their societal limitations by replicating modeled success or achievements. Bandura (1997) supports this analysis in his assertion that among occurrences particularly damaging to participants' efficacy (and reifying of limiting self-concepts) are instances in which individuals observe others they perceive to be of similar competence fail despite high efforts and/or a reasonable allotment of resource-opportunities. Under these conditions, individuals are prone to accept their own subsequent failures as indicants of shared personal deficiencies (Brown & Inouye, 1978; Weinberg et al., 1979). This phenomenon directly ties to the second modality of vicarious influence present in the excerpted statements and the expressions of the majority of interview participants.

This second modality of vicarious influence is seen readily in Waldo's observation of the fate of "brothers...neighbors, [and] fathers" as an indicator of his eventual entry into the carceral system. Evidence of this second modality of vicarious influence also exists in Gilbert's observation of "males stronger and smarter...get[ting] their heads bashed by police or drunk and bashing each other" and of "white men ... kidnap[ping] girls and load[ing] them onto Uhauls."

Each of these expressions offers evidence of the concept of inescapability articulated to the participant by authority figures.

The expressions of both Waldo and Gilbert are representative of a trend that occurred throughout most participants' interviews—a factoring of the perceived experiences of others whom participants viewed as better equipped as a metric for the predisposition of oppression, its resulting conditions, and the reach of its imposed limitations.

In occurrences where an observer perceives the observed as modeling both similarities to self and aspirational competencies, vicarious influence can increase efficacy by causing an individual to perceive their inefficacy as a skill deficit rather than a misappraisal of another's possessed skills. As a result, the observer can begin to see the observed as an instructive model. The vicarious influence of the observed in this case may influence the observer toward greater aspiration and purposeful self-development. Zimmerman and Ringle's (1981) study found that aspirational models who vocalize hope, determination, and perseverance in the face of obstacles before overcoming challenges exponentially influence observers in areas beyond a modeled skill. In parallel to this finding, the descriptions offered by participants illustrate the manners in which vocalizations and presentation of hopelessness, pusillanimity, and hesitance by those seen as models of aspirational competencies may substantially decrease individual efficacy in areas beyond the specifics of observed interactions.

There is evidence of this phenomenon in operation in the connection drawn by Waldo, in his descriptions of "hard working...educated men... who'd gone to school and had a better shot than anybody" being defeated by the same system(s) that the participant sought to overcome. Waldo statement shows that he defined those he observed as better equipped by their retention of

the aspirational competencies of being industrious and lettered. Evidence of the significant way in which this observation influenced Waldo rests in his commentary:

> By five years old, I knew I was going to be in the system. I'd seen it take my brothers, my neighbors, fathers. I saw it cut down hard-working men, educated men, men who'd gone to school and had a better shot than anybody—I saw the system eat them alive.

Waldo provides both aspirational competencies and a description of the fate of those he observed as an explanation of the reasoning that caused him to believe that his incarceration was inevitable at five years of age.

Similarly, Gilbert provided the aspirational competencies of his models. He described his models as "stronger and smarter" and paralleled the fate of his models and their inability to protect others as evidence of the inescapability of the harm and captivity that served as a condition of his living, and the need for (and absence of) protection for his entire community. Gilbert described his observation of white men, "kidnap[ping] girls and load[ing] them onto Uhauls" as an indication that the claims made to him as a child by authorities were true. This articulation's framing against adult males' presence, described as "stronger and faster," implies that the harm experienced was a threat to both the health and literal freedom of fellow members of his reservation.

Evoking further understanding of how authority figures' actions and statements resulted in Gilbert and other participants seeing their oppressive condition as systemic is Gilbert's recognition that the harm came from identifiable groups—white men and police officers. Gilbert's description of how these observations vicariously influenced him helped show how harrowing conditions came to be seen by him and others as inescapable and unchallengeable.

Moreover, Gilbert's assertion that his observation provided credence to the claims touted by authorities fosters a more nuanced understanding of what participants offer as a critical correlation. Oppressive systems not only operate in the words of authorities, but they present

themselves—through their impact on communities—as too large, too established, and too formidable to be challenged. As such, the limits they impose—resulting in the inefficacy, futility of action, and constrained choice experienced by participants—form a larger narrative that presents these conditions as an inescapable consequence of existence as an individual whom the oppressive systems of authority are designed to oppose. The pervasiveness with which these conditions were presented to participants as indelible is further understood by considering earlier sections of Gilbert's transcript. The participant makes clear that the authorities to which he referred were not the police officers (whom he described as bashing males that were "stronger and smarter" than him), but the school teachers and religious figureheads who claimed the harmful conditions of incarceration, disease, and drug addiction to be a consequence of his skin color.

> I was taught explicitly by these teachers who thought they were white saviors for coming to the res [reservation] as school teachers and evangelists of Whiteness as God—I was taught that incarceration and disease and drug addiction were just a consequence of my color. (Gilbert)

The descriptions offered by Waldo and Gilbert are illustrative of experiences reported across participant interviews. The descriptions of these participants were selected, in part, because of differences in their demographic profiles.

Gilbert, age 32, is an Indigenous, non-religious, non-binary, master's degree recipient whose most recent length of incarceration was one year at the age of 22. Gilbert was incarcerated before the age of 18, with multiple arrests: one occurred between the ages of 5 and 9; six between the ages of 13 and 17; and three between the ages of 18 and 22.

Waldo, age 45, is a Black, Christian, male, and doctoral degree recipient whose most recent length of incarceration was for 14 years at the age of 24. Waldo was also incarcerated

before the age of 18, with one arrest between the ages of 18 and 22 and three arrests between the ages of 23 and 27.

Table 6 Disaggregated Data for Participants 11 and 28

Disaggregated data for Participants 11 and 28

IP#	Name	Age	R/E	S/G	EL	RP	PL	IL	AI	<18	<10	13–17	18–22	23–27	LI	LC
11	Gilbert	32	O-I	M/NB	M	NR	E	1	22	Y	1	6	3	0	11	21
28	Waldo	45	B	M/M	D	C	E	14	24	Y	0	0	1	3	5	40

Note. IP# = Interview Participant Number; Name = Pseudonym Name; Age = Current Age; R/E = Race/Ethnicity; S/G = Sex/ Gender; EL = Education Level; RP= Religious Preference; PL = Preferred Language; IL = recent Incarceration Length; AI = Age at start of recent Incarceration; <18 = Incarcerated before 18 years old; < 10 = Number of arrests ages 5–9 years old; 13–17 = Number of arrests ages 13–17; 18–22 = Number of arrests ages 18–22; LI = years since Last Involvement; LC = Age of Last Criminality

Despite significant differences in environment, upbringing, race, ethnicity, religious identity, exposure to the carceral system, and length of desistance, Gilbert and Waldo offer parallel descriptions of how vicarious influences reified limiting and non-critiqued self-concepts and assumptions that generated from their interactions with civic authority.

Bandura's work (1986, 1997) supports both this analysis of the manners in which vicarious influences resulted in the concretization of participants limiting self-concepts and an assertion that the vicarious influences participants experienced beyond adolescence further entrenched participants belief in their assumption that their societal condition and their imposed social limitations were immutable. Bandura's (1986, 1997) assertion that observed behavior displayed by component models, whether peer or aspirational, transmit knowledge and teach observers strategies to manage environmental demands would suggest that an observer would inherently receive these same models' failures to overcome or escape the conditions of oppression and imposed criminality as evidence of futility.

For most interview participants, their early formations of self-concept were significantly influenced by authorities who effectively communicated a limitation of agency and a future of

violence, victimization, and criminality by asserting them as a consequence of static attributes and circumstances beyond the control of participants. Further, for these participants, a lifetime of vicarious influences reified internalized assumptions of futility while simultaneously revealing the pervasiveness of institutional and social oppression that served as an anchor of imposing limitations.

With an established understanding of the correlation between increases in (a) the duration which an individual had held to a belief; (b) the age at which acculturated concepts are communicated; (c) the pervasiveness of evidence supporting a belief; and (d) the difficulty individuals experience in revising or challenging their long-held beliefs (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 2000), there is ample explanation for their adoption and retention of limiting self-beliefs described by most interview participants and for their previously held view of incarceration as having been inevitable or deserved.

Compounding the challenge of desistance of most interview participants was the belief that reflection in search of alternative outcomes was a nugatory and fruitless practice (NC = 30) and that engagement in it would lead to their vulnerability to harm as a result of inattention to threat (NC = 26). Thus, they faced a momentous challenge of reimagining truths they had long held as absolute—that contributed to their identities and understandings of their relations to the world—as challengeable beliefs. Further, many interview participants also faced the added obstacle of having a long-held perspective of the futility of praxis. The likelihood of engagement in reflection was further reduced by the scarcity of resources, as environmental conditions resulted in the necessary assignment of participants' cognitive availabilities toward the tangible realities of inequity and resource insecurity.

To understand the role that scarcity plays in preventing desistance, it is necessary to understand how individuals became cognizant of their condition of resource insecurity. Embedded in this consideration is a question of whether individuals navigated their understanding of resource scarcity through:

- a recognition of unmet needs in measure to what naturally emerges (e.g., feeling such as hunger);
- a recognition of discrepancy between the resources they are allotted and what others have amassed or been given; or
- verbal persuasion or vicarious influence.

Based on the majority of participants' responses, the answer to this question is that individuals navigate their understanding of resource scarcity through all three. While all three types of occurrences seemed to have informed participants' understanding of the resource insecurity they experienced, it was the verbal persuasion and vicarious influence of aspirational models, who were able to survive despite being impacted by the same systemic boundaries, that informed most participants approaches to filling unmet essential needs (NC = 25).

Returning to Bandura's assertion that "component models transmit knowledge and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands" (1997, p. 88), the thinking and action of participants are logical. Explicitly bound by a system and its authorized representatives and seeing that even aspirational models were unable to secure liberation from the boundaries of imposed self-concepts that—supported by mechanisms of institutional oppression—reify the constrained choice of criminal identities continually, participants observed their aspirational models' management of their environmental demands as a model for survival (NC = 25).

Interview participants were mired in a constant and expanding state of threat, in which they were inundated with a need to prioritize the gathering and protecting their essential resources due to widespread inequity operating as causation for competition. The adoption and retention of long-standing and harmful social constructs generated in the larger race for limited resources, for most from an early age, occupied interview participants in ways that prevented them from being able to enter the reflective space required for desistance. Add to this the efficacy reducing effects of limiting self-concepts informed by social curricula, representatives of authoritative and institutional oppression, as well as direct experiences and vicarious influences that resulted in cyclic development and reification of harmful operating assumptions, and the network of barriers that individuals must overcome to arrive at transformative learning and desistance become increasingly apparent.

Throughout this section and the larger presentation of this research, there has been discussion of how specific influences and experiences informed interview participants' feelings of inefficacy and limitation. Belief in the futility of self-championing, in the immutability of their conditions, the perceived necessity of engagement in criminal violence as a means of survival, and the presence of exponential threats acting as a barrier to engagement in the reflection needed for transformative learning and desistance, result in desistance appearing to be an insurmountable challenge. What will be considered in the sections of analysis that follow is how, despite these barriers and challenges, participants successfully engaged in their desistance and transformative learning processes.

Analytic Category II: Authentic Desistance as a Transformative Process

Authentic Desistance: An Emic Perspective

A question that repeatedly arose in both the literature of transformative learning (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 2000) and desistance (Laub & Sampson, 2001) was how we define and measure the authenticity of these processes. An understanding that emerges from this research is that the general use of the term desistance, being similar to the term transformative learning in its dual employment as a process and an outcome, shares the challenge of overcoming its use as a colloquial means of describing or giving causality to outward behavioral change.

In describing the process of desistance, participants provided precise terms that differentiate between desistance and outwardly similar behavioral changes, such as discontinuance or cessation, in two distinct ways. The first is through a consideration of temporality and permanence discussed widely in interview participants assertions that discontinuance and cessation are temporary and lack the permanence of desistance. The second is by giving causality to the former's temporary nature and the latter's permanence. Participants purposefully differentiated the terms by explaining their common motivations. In their curation of experiences, participants offered two primary motivations for the temporary discontinuance and cessation from the criminality as the need for immediate protection (NC = 21) and as an intention to acquire tangible or quantifiable benefit (NC = 30). In both cases, participants described those engaging in cessation or discontinuance as temporarily exhibiting behavioral change for the reason of influencing the behavior of others, but not as having undergone what participants described as the process of desistance or "deading."

Christopher summarized what the sample group expressed as being three of the most critical components of desistance:

> Deading is a private process. When you dead, you drop all parts of the life. You dead because you were in some deep thought and something snapped—in a positive way—to make you have to change. Something made you see something different. (Christopher)

Christopher first differentiated how desistance differs from the external presentation that participants identified as being attributed to cessation and discontinuance. He described desistance as an internal or private undertaking. Second, he described desistance as a process synonymous with the concept of reflective learning and resulting action. Third, he asserted that the change that occurs due to "deep thought," or reflective learning, is positive and directly relates to a change in perspective. Moreover, his description of desistance as causing an individual to "drop all of the life" suggested that the changes that come from the reflective learning undergone during desistance result in more than minute changes.

Consideration of the criteria used by desisters to explain desistance initiates two worthy dialogues related to the literature reviewed. The first relates to the array of definitions used in the fields of criminology and behavioral studies. Steeped deeply in etic perspectives and quantitative analysis (Laub & Sampson, 2001), the literature of desistance has, by and large, looked at outward behavioral change as sufficient evidence of the occurrence of the nuanced and complex process of desistance. However, descriptions offered by participants in this study, who have themselves desisted from criminality, suggest that the criterion of behavioral change is an insufficient determiner of whether desistance has occurred. Overlooked are the motivations and process by which former offenders arrived at a shift in perspectives and reasoned actions that resulted in their transformative change. Most researchers within the small body of desistance literature have concluded that many of the behavioral changes they classified as desistance resulted from fear or desire for tangible rewards. The results of this research suggest that this may be a conflation of the permanent process of desistance with the processes of cessation and

discontinuance. Moreover, an analysis of how participants defined authentic desistance—and differentiated it from other seemingly similar but separate processes—offered credibility and alignment to more recent qualitative studies of the desistance process (Berger et al., 2017) and the application of transformative learning to the desistance process (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, 2000; Nerstrom, 2014, 2017).

The findings of this study did not align with the primary finding of Berger et al.'s (2017) seminal study of the criminal desistance of former gang members that the most common reason for desistance was a reflection that occurred due to personal or vicarious victimization; however, where this study does align is in the findings that desistance exists as a process of reflective learning and action. Berger et al. (2017) described this process as phasic, beginning with a triggering event followed by reflective contemplation, exploration of new perspectives, exiting gang affiliation, and maintenance of separation.

In determining the reason for the absence of Berger et al.'s (2017) findings from this research, the answer may rest in the conflation of processes. While participants in this research did cite that they temporarily underwent behavioral changes due to fear that occurred due to victimization or the prospect of victimization, they articulated these behavioral changes as being responsive to threat and not the result of reflective learning. At the point at which Berger et al. (2017) had interviewed participants, the subjects were involved in gang prevention programs as gang preventionists. Viewed through the lens of the descriptions given by participants in this research, Berger et al.'s (2017) study may not have differentiated the outward cessation or discontinuance of criminality from the internal process of authentic desistance. That is to say, despite their study's focus on the process of desistance, in applying a generalized definition of desistance, Berger et al. (2017) may have misidentified cessation or discontinuance as the start of

participants' desistance processes, rather than a conditional response. This scenario seems all the more likely when we consider Berger et al.'s (2017) identification of former gang-members' adoption of identities as gang preventionists as being a "secondary desistance" (p. 489). This occurrence would align with this research and the descriptions provided by its participants as having been the actual start of their authentic desistance.

Despite the misalignment between Berger et al.'s (2017) study and the findings of this research regarding the start of the desistance process, the two find a supporting alignment in their evidencing desistance as a reflective learning and action process. Having utilized Berger et al.'s (2017) study as a point of comparison from which to extract context and understand the necessity of applying the criteria of desistance provided by participants, this narrative will demonstrate authentic desistance as a transformative learning process through the application of transformative learning as a lens for understanding participants' experiences.

Understanding Participants Experiences Through Transformative Learning Lenses

When examined through the transformative learning lenses provided by the work of Mezirow (2000), Cranton (2016), and Nerstrom (2014), the findings of this research reveal the journey of desistance to be a transformative learning process. Support for this categorization of desistance can be seen in two ways. The first is through a careful analysis of this research in which the larger concept and more recognized attributes of transformative learning provide context. The second rests on engaging with how some of the more nuanced aspects of transformative learning theory align to the shared occurrences widely experienced by participants, thus offering additional insights into the manners in which reflective learning resulted in perspective shifts and resulting behavioral changes.

It was the utilization of Nerstrom's (2014) four sequential stages of having experiences; making assumptions; challenging perspectives; and transformative learning as a lens that led through which to make consideration of some of the repeating occurrences and patterns that exist within the sample of interview participants, in part due to Nerstrom's focus on the relationship between critical experiences and changes in assumptions.

Lens #1: Nerstrom's Sequential Model. Each interview participant in this study described their desistance as having begun with an experience of success in an endeavor unrelated to desistance (NC = 30). With interview participants' successes resulting in their making new assumptions of their ability, which were largely fueled by the generalized efficacy of their success, an application of Nerstrom's 4-phases demands consideration of what insight can be extracted from participants' principal desistance-related assumptions.

A majority of interview participants assumed that their embodiment of specific identities meant the availability of options that they saw as inherent to those identities (NC = 19). Moreover, they assumed that the perception of options suggested an ability to exercise a chosen option despite unknown variables (NC = 19). The generation of these assumptions suggests, in line with other considerations in this research, that most participants' held views of themselves that were limiting in their inclusion of self-concepts that led them to believe they were ineffectual or ill-equipped for endeavors outside the realm of criminality, and that for most, perceptions of limitation were not the resulting sum of cumulative skill-specific appraisals. Rather, the aforementioned assumptions suggest participants had either always seen, or came to see, socially reinforced pairings of identities and options as a primary indicator of personally viable options. This assertion is supported by participants' pattern of finding that the appraisals of success that resulted in their desistance, and the perception of newly viable options, came

from experiences that caused them to perceive themselves as having an opportunity to take on new identities, it finds plausible explanation in Bandura's (1997) theories on the impact of social construct and observational learning. As most participants experienced disenfranchisement during their formative years, they came to see their shared identity markers with others who, despite indications of ability from skill-specific appraisals, still faced the same limiting options as evidence that indicated that skill-specific abilities were inconsequential. This type of observation was presumably significantly damaging for many as it is plausible that an active observer would come to view their conditions as immutable due to their having observed the prevalence with which other individuals who exhibit great talents or skills were unable to alter dominant narratives.

Moreover, interview participants' perception of options as directly tied to external, observable, and static attributes of identity were potentially furthered by observations of peers with specific identities being able to exercise choice and access environments, despite their talents or abilities not rendering them as qualified.

This same set of assumptions may also offer insight into one reason why programming meant to provide formerly incarcerated individuals with skill-building training often fails to deter re-offense; a high or nuanced understanding of a discrete skill may not mean a shift in identity in scenarios in which participants do not see specific skills as impacting their overall identity. Thus, for most participants, general efficacy calculated through a consideration of options perceived as connected to self-identity presumably superseded skill-specific efficacy gathered through training, verbal persuasion, or observation of outcomes in either direct or vicarious experiences.

In line with Nerstrom's third phase (2014), the challenges of perspectives that occurred for interview participants were reflexive of the discussed assumptions. Perspectives that

participants described as being significantly challenged, as a result of experiences of success, that led to shifts in identity included: participants' belief in their actions' futility, as individuals previously saw losing as an immutable condition of their personage; participants' former prioritizations and identifications of essential needs; and participants' perspective on the acceptability of their former behaviors, which no longer resonated as tolerable or advantageous, despite little to no change in participants' physical circumstances. Each of the challenges to, and subsequent shifts in, perspective support for an interpretation of the desistance process as having begun with the generation and adoption of a new identity. In coupling the chronology of events described with participants' latent affirmation of a relationship between identity and options, there is a suggestion that desistance is more plausibly arrived upon through the sometimes unfounded adoption of identity (or attribute) than it is by the accumulation of discrete skills and perspectives.

In Nerstrom's fourth stage (2014), the occurrence of transformative learning is evidenced by individuals having adopted and acted upon new perspectives and becoming open to further learning. The descriptions given by participants, of having adopted new self-concepts and identities with which they align, place participants' actions firmly within the construct Nerstrom's definition.

While a view of the desistance process described by participants through the lens of Nerstrom's (2014) work provides understandings that are critical to understanding the experiences of participants, a closer look at the habits of practice that participants exhibited as a result of their shifts in perspectives and their adoption of information seeking practices through the Lens of Cranton's 2016 work provides additional points of insight.

Lens #2: Habits of Mind as Presented by Cranton. One of the most informative lenses applied to the examination and analysis of interview participants' experiences was Cranton's (2016) presentation of the habits of mind. While the habits of mind come from Mezirow's transformative learning theory (2000), Cranton's work (2016) increased attention to this theory. An examination of the interviews through a habits of mind lens revealed a pattern whereby participants questioned assumptions and revised self-perceptions, which led to emancipation from constraints that stemmed from former habits of mind.

While interview participants spoke of both dramatic epochal shifts in understanding and smaller, more incremental learning, the majority spoke about change belonging to two specific domains of the habits—psychological and epistemic. By the nature of their interconnectedness, most of the domains belonging to the h of mind appeared at some point across the interviews, but revisions to psychological and epistemic habits were predominant in what participants offered as momentous events and their crucial learning.

Indicative of the importance of revisions in participants' psychological habits of mind is the consistency with which changes in this domain appeared across this study's findings.

In relating the events that provoked their transformative learning and desistance, interview participants described the receipt of information incongruent with their constructed self-concepts as being the cause for their challenge of assumptions that they previously saw as immutable (NC = 30)—the most notable of which was an assumption that they could not succeed in alternate roles and endeavors. Whether because of their observation, another's observations and appraisals, or achievements that individuals set for themselves as metrics of whether they could succeed in non-criminal endeavors, success in activities unrelated to criminality resulted in participants making critical shifts in their self-concept. Participants' successes simultaneously

challenged the narrative of futility that had concretized into an assumption of inefficacy for participants and provided them with an alternative identity option.

What occurred for interview participants were simultaneous presentations of evidence negating a central tenet upon which they had built their core self-concepts and an alternate, less-limiting self-concept for adoption. These initial shifts in self-concept led to further revision of psychological habits of mind, seen explicitly in participants' identification and reprioritization of needs (NC = 28) and their reconsideration of perspectives (NC = 30)—now at odds with their newly adopted identities.

The reflection that came from interview participants adopting and refining self-concepts led to their continual reappraisal of options. A majority of interview participants came to see options they viewed as being associated with and available to their new self-concepts and identities as being viable options for themselves (NC = 19). With participants having engaged in criminality as a means of attempting to secure essential resources (NC = 30) and ensure their safety (NC = 30), the options presented in conjunction with new self-concepts led to participants' reappraisal of criminal options and even habitual actions that they came to see as no longer necessary, advantageous, or tolerable (NC = 24). Once interview participants experienced revisions within the psychological habits of mind, they became more open to further revision in the same domain, exhibited by their continuous effort to align toward newly acquired self-concepts (NC = 30).

In examining what was described by most interview participants as a progression from the experience of success that initiated their desistance to their engaging in the intentioned reappraisal of past experiences that they saw as foundational to the formation of their self-limiting beliefs—there is also evidence of a considerable shift in participants' epistemic habits of

mind. Participants' initial experiences of success provided participants generalizable efficacy and burgeoning self-concepts that they used to critique previously held assumptions about the futility of their efforts—and what they perceived as the limits of their ability and options. Both the second and third phases of desistance described by participants, in which they engaged in alignment toward new identities and the intentional recollection and reappraisal of past events, are markedly different from the first. In the latter events, the emergence of information that results in a revision of self-concept is not an unforeseen occurrence. Instead, gathering information that would result in a revision of self-concept was participants' motivation and purpose. This critical difference between these events provides a view into how the experiences that preceded participants' engagement in the intentional recollection and reassessment of prior experiences resulted in changes to their epistemic habits of mind.

Most interview participants described the limiting conditions of the psychological habits that existed before their desistance initiating events, resulting in their inability to see and consider options beyond those in service to their immediate survival (NC = 30). In their descriptions, participants vividly described their existence as one of reaction rather than praxis. These same participants repeatedly communicated their pre-desistance reality as analogous to living like animals, subject to conditions dictated by their environmental realities and unable to author their roles or identities. Due to allocating their cognitive resources toward safety and essential needs, the conditions under which participants operated came at the expense of their cognitive space and the energy needed to engage in thinking beyond immediate need and toward unseen options and future outcomes (NC = 30). For most interview participants, the prevalence and reach of the long-standing, social, and institutional mechanisms that fostered their survivalist environments, and the accompanying narratives of futility they had received at crucial moments

of development (NC = 25), resulted in their seeing their realities as unchangeable (NC = 25) and themselves as both undeserving and unequipped for societal roles beyond those they inhabited (NC = 25).

Therefore, these participants would not only view any presentation or exploration of options beyond those that they associated with their societal placement as unfounded and fruitless (NC = 30), but they very literally lacked the mental and emotional resources to engage in a search or exploration of possibilities (NC = 30). After receiving information that led to a revision of their self-concept by negating the immutability that they had assigned their circumstances, participants inherently came to see the constructions of their psychological habits as alterable (NC = 30). The realization that their self-concept and identity were alterable came as a flash of revelation for some. For others, it was the result of having been forced to continually address what were now incongruences between their new self-concept, their habitual practices, and perspectives remaining from old self-concepts.

Based on participants' responses, it was feasibly the combination of options manifested from self-concept changes and a need for congruence between their newly adopted self-concepts, their perspectives, and their actions that led participants to make significant changes in epistemic habits through reflective engagements. These engagements resulted in the continued exploration of and reallocating resources toward alternate options and future outcomes as well as participants acquiring growing confirmation that former assumptions of limit and immutability were inaccurate. Presumably, this evolved into participants adopting a view of information as integral to self-construction, making collecting and reflecting upon information a priority—a way to build or revise themselves. This reasoning for the collection of data and the newly adopted perspective of even established assumptions as challengeable in the face of new information

extended into an essential belief—namely that reappraising experiences that were foundational to their now-incongruent assumptions and perspectives would result in their being able to shed the vestiges of their former self-concept further. This assertion is validated in both the prevalence and dedication with which interview participants actively reflected to further align with their new self-concepts (NC = 30).

Participants' purposeful engagements with memories of experiences they saw as having led to their adoption of negative and limiting self-concepts (NC = 23) suggest revisions to participants' habits in both the psychological and epistemic domains. Participants' newly formed belief that they could revise or remove deeply entrenched assumptions (that prevented them from fully inhabiting their newly adopted self-concepts) by re-engaging their formative experiences is evidence of significant revision to their epistemic habits. In one sense, this revision exists in participants now having the mental space to think beyond their immediate circumstances and being aware of the factors that previously occupied facilities. In another sense, evidence of these revisions rests in participants having generated a view of themselves capable of planning for successful outcomes and an implicit belief that experiences construct them. Additionally, the progression of revision to the epistemic habits can be seen in most interview participants, having gone from these aforementioned revisions to conceptualizing reappraisal of past experiences as being a means of altering their impact (NC =23). By way of epistemic revision—a newly formed understanding that they could make exponential revisions to their self-concept by addressing these singularly defining moments whose impact had spread endemically over time—participants came to experience emancipating changes in psychological habits of mind. Henry described this phenomenon in the following way:

> I saw my life through a lens of negativity and made all my choices accordingly. The same things that may have been recognized as opportunities for other people may have

> seemed like an attack to me. Like someone saying, "yo, go get this job—they're hiring," I received it as mocking… and criticism. When I go back and take those glasses off, I not only see that moment different, I see everything after it different, and it's like a domino effect that isn't just one line, it spreads out into multiple lines—because by taking those negativity glasses off, I can decide who and what I am.

Substantiated in their revision of epistemic habits and the resulting engagements are the manners in which participants' reappraisal of past experiences resulted in multiple and simultaneous revisions to self-concept. These occurrences emerged as participants began to see themselves as generally more capable, enabled to self-author (and edit), and thus able to select and define their roles within their environments (NC = 30).

Moreover, the choice of participants to cognitively re-engage past traumatic experiences also marked a shift in another component of their psychological habits—their values. Participants offered perspectives on this particular occurrence with sentiments similar to those shared by Quincy:

> Reentering those memories was something that I'd done everything in my power to avoid, but in trying to become a wholer version of the new me, to be in a place where being in a shit situation wasn't going to land me back in violence—I knew I had to make the trade of going through that pain. It was one of the first times I actively cared about my future more than my present. It was also one of the first times where the sacrifice seemed like it wouldn't be in vain.

The trade of present comfort for future safety that Quincy described aligned with the expressions given across participants' interviews regarding their engagement in the reappraisal of early defining experiences that they saw as having generated harmful self-concepts. Whereas most interview participants formerly avoided engaging with these critical experiences (NC = 20), many began to see value in using them as an arena for reflective engagement (NC = 23). Occurrences where changes in value (psychological Habit of Mind) led to changes in learning modality (epistemic Habit of Mind), which led to further psychological habits, are again seen in

tandem in other aspects of this study's findings. One area in which this holds true is in alterations participants made in connection to their somatic responses.

Participants' explanations of how they purposefully engaged in reflective practices to eliminate, suppress, or disregard somatic responses sitnal fundamental shifts in their beliefs about how information can be utilized (epistemic). Participants' new modalities of engagement with information resulted in further revisions to their psychological habits of mind—namely in areas of self-concept that governed their response to threat and their ability to see themselves as able to overcome the cognitive paralysis that previously accompanied their somatic responses. Other shifts in the psychological habits that connected to participants' attempts to alter or disregard their somatic responses include shifts in their prioritization and identification of needs (NC = 28), as well as an increased and recognized efficacy toward mitigating the impact of habitual responses to trauma so significant that they resulted in bodily responses across the span of years and overrode participants' ability to reason (NC = 28). For many, such as Israel, this addressing of somatic responses again confirmed a shift in values.

> Do you know why the Hulk goes green? It's to protect Bruce Banner. When I got mad, and my body would take over, it made me faster and stronger. To undo that, I was taking away the protection that I had, my armor. Imagine Bruce Banner trying to fight instead of the Hulk. Now imagine me in the hood with people trying to hurt me and the police trying to hurt me, and all across the U.S., the white people trying to hurt me. I had to want to be the new me hella bad to start dismantling the only protection I had.

In each instance, the revisions and removals of previous assumptions and perspectives would, in turn, allow participants to overcome the challenge of having to consistently engage in the work of needing to rethink what were now incongruent actions or perspectives that stemmed from the acculturated beliefs that were remnants of their previous—partially remaining—selves. For each of the interviewed, a change in values resulted in changes in their willingness toward vulnerability, both emotionally and physically, for the sake of being able to more fully inhabit

self-concepts and identities that they began to see as available to them because of their initiating experiences (NC = 30).

Having used Cranton's (2016) work as a lens to explore how participants' revisions to their epistemic and psychological habits of mind were integral components of their transformative learning and desistance process, an application of Mezirow's (2000) work provides a lens that illuminates yet another critical consideration.

Lens #3: Mezirow's Ten Steps and Change Permanence. While Mezirow's ten steps of transformative learning (2000) require neither that individuals experience all the steps nor that the steps occur in a particular sequence, the theory serves the function of providing a means of evidencing transformative learning in its delineation of what Mezirow saw as common occurrences in the transformative learning process. While some have condensed the process into three or four steps (Taylor, 2007), there is evidence that suggests that there is a direct correlation between the number of Mezirow's steps identified in an individual's experience and the likelihood that the transformative learning process occurred (Brock, 2010).

Throughout this study, participants' descriptions provided ample evidence of alignment with nine of Mezirow's transformative learning steps. Applying the lens of Mezirow's first step (i.e., a disorienting dilemma), it is crucial to separate the concept of disorientation from the concepts of fear, anger, guilt, and shame belonging to Mezirow's second step, which did not appear in the descriptions given by interview participants. In examining step 1 for what it communicates, there arises a question of whether participants described experiences in which the receipt of disconfirming evidence of their deeply held beliefs and assumptions caused them to question and engage in reconsideration of their assumptions. The easily fielded response to this question is "yes".

In recalling what they described as the start of their desistance, interview participants offered recollections that met Mezirow's first step criteria in crucial ways. When participants' encountered descriptions or indications of their ability that did not match their long-held understandings of their capability, they were forced to reconcile the incongruence of these newly identified attributes with their previous understandings of self, which as a result of new information, participants found to be insufficient or incorrect (NC = 30). For participants who previously saw their actions as futile, themselves incapable of success, and saw their options as limited to criminality, the provision of new attributes and self-concept resulted in a disequilibrium that led to step three of Mezirow's ten (2000): a reconsideration of assumptions regarding their capability and opportunities.

In their interpretation of the term "disorienting dilemma" as negatively connotated and meant to express discomfort, some may contend with this analysis of participants having experienced a disorienting dilemma. This is a point that is returned to later in this narrative in relation to the absence of Mezirow's second step from interview participants' descriptions of their experiences.

Evidence of step 4 (a recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared) rests in interview participants' description of criminality, incarceration, and post-incarceration release; specifically, it involves a recounting of how variable threats in each in environment drew on their mental energies in ways that prevented them engaging in the reflection needed for desistance (NC = 30). Participants described the circumstances created by residence in these spaces and the subsequent need to navigate ongoing safety and resource insecurity issues as requiring an allocation of mental resources that diminished their capacity to reason. They described their diminished capacity as having led to reactionary actions and an

inability to consider—or disregard for—long-term outcomes. In relating the challenge of not having cognitive resources available to allocate toward long-term reasoning as a condition of circumstance, rather a consequence of their lacking talent or innate ability and acknowledging that this condition presented a barrier to the reflective engagement necessary for desistance—commenting participants corroborated a cognizance that the discontent they experienced as a result of their circumstances were not unique experiences. Further evidencing this cognizance is the extent to which participants recognized that their discontent, processes of transformation, and the circumstances related to these occurrences are a part of a shared experience, demonstrated through the pronouns selected by participants during their description.

Understanding that the purpose of the interviews was for me to learn from their specific experiences, most participants made attempts at speaking in self-referential pronouns. Participants frequently utilized terms that suggest that participants saw their related experiences as collectively shared—despite their attempts. Among the terms that participants used most frequently were collective plural forms of the pronouns *you* and *we*, and the plural indefinite forms of the pronouns *someone* and *anyone.*

Step 5 (exploring options for new roles, relationships, and actions) was tied closely to participants' experiences of disorienting dilemmas. In describing their desistance as having begun due to perceiving themselves as being able to occupy roles and inhabit identities beyond what they previously thought possible (NC = 30), interview participants demonstrated a trend of having begun their desistance by adopting new self-concepts and identities. Moreover, each set of critical reflection and resulting action(s) shared by participants pointed toward the identification of desistance as a process in which participants actively explored new self-concepts. Throughout their desistance process, participants explored ways to actively align their

perspectives, interactions, and relationship to others in ways that they perceived as more fully embodying the intersectional and more nuanced aspects of roles they were exploring.

While Step 6 (planning a course of action) is often thought of as a set of concrete and sequential steps, most interview participants in this study engaged in this phase by reflecting on their somatic responses to prepare for moments of duress (NC = 28). In seeking to limit the impact of duress on their ability to reason soundly and perceive the intricacies of occurrences during moments of great stress or threat, participants assessed circumstances in which their commitment to abstain from criminality might be tested. Throughout the interviews, participants described their planning as a process in which they reflect on their actions, weigh the outcomes of prior experiences, and engage in imagined experiences to plan for variables. By rehearsing their intentional suppression or disregarding of bodily responses, most interview participants, in a very literal sense, planned and took a course of action to address what they saw as common and imminent barriers to their ongoing desistance (NC = 28).

Step 7 (acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans) was substantiated in both participants' descriptions of specific one-off events and in their intentional acquisition of knowledge and skills to help implement a plan becoming a routine practice. Throughout the study, interview participants described themselves as purposefully seeking information to develop their ability to assess situations, increase the likelihood of desired outcomes, or reappraise their ability in a particular domain. The degree to which this practice played a role in the transformative learning experiences of participants can also be seen in participants' intentional engagement in the re-examination of past experiences that they viewed as having led to their adoption of limiting self-beliefs or a view of incarceration as inevitable or deserved (NC = 28).

The role of reflection can also be seen in interview participants having engaged in their reflection toward understanding how somatic responses have traditionally impacted their ability to make sound decisions (NC = 28). In each instance, participants engaged in the practice of intentionally acquiring knowledge and skills to impact their ability to take actions beneficial toward their goal of remaining desistant in the future.

Step 8 (the provisional trying of new roles) and Step 9 (the building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships) rest in participants' continued assessment of the alignment between their new self-concepts and their prioritization of needs and values and perspectives. Also tied to these steps is the increase of instances in which participants found themselves caring about others (NC = 6) or disregarding former influential figures they no longer saw as serving their needs (NC = 30).

Step 10 (reintegration into one's life based on conditions dictated by one's new perspective) is seen in participants having exhibited changes in areas where they found incongruence between their former practices and their new self-concepts. Evidencing the reintegration of their new identities and perspectives are participants' descriptions of themselves as inhabiting identities that they differentiate from their former selves by pointing to changes in inclination, reactions, and perspectives (NC = 30) as well as the confirmations of others who have attested to changes they have seen in participants (NC = 28).

While each of Mezirow's (2000) steps offered considerable insight into the process of desistance as it occurred for participants, there are other crucial indicators of transformative learning that Mezirow offered—among these are the concepts of learning outcome and change permanence.

In his descriptive criteria of the outcome of transformative learning being an individual becoming "more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8), Mezirow distinguishes transformative learning from learning outcomes that result in individuals being unjust, biased, mal-intended, harmful, static, concretized, or naïve. While participants' transitions from criminality to desistance already do much to meet this descriptive criterion, further insight into this criterion's fulfillment exists in participants' narratives, evidencing increases in reflective practice, discriminating reasoning, and emotional capability to change.

Indicators of the change permanence that Mezirow (2000) saw as integral proof of transformative learning rests in the length of time that interview participants have been desistant from criminality as well as the extent to which transformation has permeated participants lives—resulting not only in their desistance from criminal behaviors (NC = 30) but in their embodiment of new identities (NC = 30). Further evidencing of participants' change permanence is the degree to which interview participants carried out and acted on new sets of perspectives and assumptions with fidelity. Upon release, participants found themselves under increased pressure. With limited means to gather essential resources, participants decided to contend with dangers that a reversion to previous behaviors and actions might have alleviated. Despite their release circumstances and a statistical likelihood of failure, participants continually chose to engage in actions befitting their new identities and self-concept. Giving further insight into how this process of transformative change occurred for interview participants is a consideration of the areas in which their experiences deviated from Mezirow's (2000) ten steps of transformative learning.

To understand the significance of the absence of Mezirow's second step, "self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame" (2000, p. 22), from interview participants descriptions of their transformative learning experiences, it is necessary to come to an understanding of how disorientation conceivably occurred for them. Having considered the alternatives to the options causing disorientation, previously held perspectives, and the limiting beliefs and oppression experienced by participants, this discomfort of being in disequilibrium at the promise of alternatives and options was presumably a welcome development and a comparatively less painful experience than the previous conditions under which participants operated.

While interview participants' expressions conveyed their lived experience of discomfort at the receipt of information that disproved their previously held assumptions (NC = 30), each viewed this state of discomfort as uniquely different from previous sources of discomfort. While participants' previous discomforts resulted from experiences that reified their belief in the futility of their efforts to overcome states of hopelessness and fear, the discomfort now being experienced by participants was rooted in new and novel challenges to the foundation from which their belief in futility originated. In this way, interview participants' experiences of disorienting dilemmas differed from the typical narrative of individuals negatively impacted or off-put by their experiences.

The same factors that made disorientation less off-putting for interview participants played a role in the absence of feelings of fear, anger, guilt, and shame from their engagement in self-examination. The participants' relief at emancipation from their limiting self-concepts overshadowed the negative feelings that Mezirow (2000) attributes to this second step. Additionally, the absence of these ill feelings from participants' descriptions can be seen as

support for an interpretation of criminality as a state of psychic duress. Reasonably, the absence of ill feelings in self-examination may suggest that for interview participants who had lived in the space of threat, ill feelings brought on by a correction of concept were relatively benign compared to their previous state of duress.

What is of further interest is that when participants recounted their engagement in the process of desistance, the concept of fear emerged in novel ways. While none of the participants described feelings of anger, guilt, or shame in connection with self-examination, there were several instances in which participants discussed their fear of failing at their desistance (NC = 30).

More specifically, participants expressed that, despite the boost in efficacy and the generalizability of the success they experienced, they remained fearful of encountering situations in which they would either not perceive, or be given, options that would allow their desistance to continue. Explanations of the fear described by participants were associated with at least one of two lines of thought. The first drew on possibilities of what may have occurred during interview participants' self-examination (Step 2), as their self-appraisal could have led to their described considerations of the limits of their ability to both tolerate specific occurrences and to identify and navigate options during times of distress. This would suggest that, even after adopting new identities through the privileging of conceptualization of options as tethered to identities over a reasoning, skill-specific appraisals could operate as indicators of viable options and that their perceptions of personal susceptibility to dysfunction remained as an influence.

The second possibility rests in acknowledging what some interview participants described as a fear of a likelihood of being endangered in ways that would require them to act violently or criminally for the sake of their safety or the protection of someone else (NC = 30).

While interview participants demonstrated their increasing openness to change as a result of engagement in the transformative process, with most interview participants having described themselves as adopting information-seeking practices (NC = 25), these same participants provided descriptions of the aforementioned fear. For these participants, the disorientation of having what they previously held as absolute truth disproven may have been causation for perceptions of their being a continual need to gather information and the difficulty of envisioning safety or protection as stable or permanent. Moreover, interview participants perceived their previous inability to assess truth correctly and cognizance of their inability to predict or control environmental variables as evidence of proclivity toward incorrect assessments of circumstance.

Analytic Category III: Emergent Phases of Desistance

Phase One: Success as the Door to New Identity

A cross-case analysis of the desistance process described by interview participants surfaces a crucial commonality worthy of consideration. For most interview participants, desistance began with an experience of direct success in an endeavor separate from the goal of avoiding criminality (NC = 28). While it may seem reasonable that desistance would operate as a natural goal for any who wished to avoid the consequences of criminality, it is crucial to remember that participants' engagement in violence and criminal acts (per participants' descriptions) was not a matter of preference. For most interview participants, engagement in criminality resulted from an early and repeated presentation of criminality as synonymous with survival due to a lack of options (NC = 25). Experiences of direct success resulted in their seeing an increased number of options as available to them (NC = 30), thus allowing them to engage in the process of aligning toward perspectives toward their newly adopted identities and self-

concepts and to exercise preference when it came resolving challenges such as the acquisition of essential resources.

What is of particular interest regarding the experiences of successes described by interview participants is the critical stipulation they had for determining whether their successes were authentic and if the opportunities presented by them were viable. The distinction suggests it is conceivable that even before the initiating events of their desistance process, participants experienced other successes that generated an awareness of incongruence between information they gathered and long-held assumptions. Participants potentially dismissed the new information because it was not sufficient to challenge their belief that attempts to inhabit roles beyond criminality were futile. Participants' distinctions between inauthentic success and authentic success; the perception of opportunity as viable versus impracticable; and the expressed need for appraisal of their probability for success to be relative to the performance of others whom they saw as unbound by resource limitation in order to make judgement of authenticity (NC = 29)—each plausibly rests in the reality that any description of suitability or talent for a role or appraisal in which criminality was a modifier would not have been antithetical with main tenets of participants' established, and limiting, self-concept(s). Any modification to accommodate or acknowledge participants' criminal histories or identities (or what an external or self-appraiser viewed as criminal attributes) may have served as further evidence of the very immutability that participants needed to challenge in order to arrive at liberation from limiting self-concepts. Any information perceived by participants as bearing even minor revisions on attributes related to their existence as violent offenders or criminals would be unlikely to make enough impact to jostle participants from habitual reasonings and perspectives.

An additional point worthy of mention in this analysis is that the majority of interview participants voiced that their experience of desistance–initiating events was one in which they wholly adopted entirely new identities or personas, rather than their identities being the result of a gathering of a cumulative set of more minor revisions to self-concepts (NC = 19). It is plausible that the readiness and urgency with which most participants took on new identities and what participants perceived as associated options—including their rejecting habitual practices of criminality (NC = 24) and seeking to align their perspectives toward their new identities and self-concepts (NC = 30)—suggests that criminality is a matter of constrained choice and circumstance rather than preference.

Phase Two: New Identity as a Catalyst to Reappraisal and Revision

The second stage of desistance in participants' phasic model was engagement in the revising of perspectives to more fully inhabit their newly adopted personas and self-concepts. As discussed in the preceding section, participants often generated or adopted new self-concepts in ways that resulted in the development of entirely new identities rather than make minor revisions to previous personas (NC = 19). While the manners in which this stage of participants' desistance offered evidence of a shift in habits—as participants at this stage actively conceptualized their perspectives and reasoning that led to their perspectives as revisable—there are additional considerations from which this analysis benefits.

The first consideration is the impact of attributes versus the impact of discrete skills. While skill and attributes are related and sometimes interchangeably used in general appraisals, in part due to their common utilization for communicating ability, a consideration of how appraisals of skills and attributes impacted interview participants differently offered some nuanced understanding. Overall, interview participants did not experience gain in efficacy or

shifts in self-concept due to appraisals that showed them as having retained or gained discrete skills (NC = 30). This outcome is in notable contrast to the impact of newly appraised and adopted attributes described by most participants, who described themselves as having experienced new definitions of self through the negation of critical components of previous, now rejected, identities (NC = 11). This difference in impact suggests that positive skill-specific appraisals are not received as synonymous with and do not easily convert into a perception of attributes. Thus, it is also probable that the inefficacy and limited self-concept experienced by interview participants, in alignment with the descriptions offered, were not the result of occurrences in which they struggled with individual skills, but rather limitations from broader self-concepts developed through vicarious influence, verbal persuasion, and direct experience.

Instances in which interview participants described themselves as having gained efficacy from success through a self-appraisal of having attributes that conflicted with their previous limiting self-concepts, despite not having identified personas for which they were able to construct an explicit model, raises questions about what linkages exist between these participants and those who arrived at desistance through the adoption of title-specific identities. The answer feasibly rests in the latter group having adopted the attributes of their identity. The conclusion drawn in this regard is that the generation or adoption of an identity, oppositional to one previously held, more commonly occurred when challenging established self-concepts: it was the attributes of the identity and the inherent agency to exercise those attributes that created the needed dissonance for disequilibrium and resulting disorientation. Whereas many participants took on new and specific identities, despite gaps in repository knowledge under the assurance that they would be able to gather the knowledge and experience needed to fill gaps of understanding and skill, there are some plausible explanations for why some interview

participants adopted attributes rather than entire identities (NC = 11). Given the finding that these participants had a higher cognizance of intersectionality (NC = 10/11), in being liberated from limiting identities, these participants may have had an aversion to the constraints of implied specialization of any singular identity. As a result, amorphous configurations of self would allow for a more versatile application of their attributes to an increased number of challenges and environments. To this effect, these participants may have effectively gained an ability to inhabit multiple identities and generated a flexible configuration of self that would make them adaptable in ways that would best serve their interests in response to changing variables. Thus, in attaching themselves to newly recognized attributes, this group of participants may have found greater flexibility to apply their newly acquired self-concepts. For example, someone who considers themselves an expert gardener may likely experience a lesser degree of generalized efficacy toward the challenge of repairing a radio set compared to someone who attaches themselves to attributes of intelligence, handiness, or resourcefulness. Variations of this explanation include the possibility that imagined identities either did not fit their personal preference or aspirations. Also, in considering their environments of social intersection, individuals may have considered the manners in which any titles they assigned themselves would either be challenged, unrecognized, or of less value than other identities available to them.

An additional and important point for this analysis rests in participants' descriptions of having overcome their dependency on drug usage due to the adoption of new self-concepts. While considered under previous self-concepts to be an essential resource for most participants (NC = 20), drugs are markedly different from other resources described as essential in that the taking up of new self-concepts did not result in the removal of their needs. In the case of drug usage—which varied greatly in form and included highly addictive substances, such as heroin,

crack, cocaine, and methamphetamines—the need participants attached to the use of illegal substances differed from other needs discussed insofar as the substances do not belong to the domain of physical needs over which individuals lack agency to opt-out of. Instead, it appears that, for participants, drug dependency was the result of psychological needs that allowed for a broader range of variability in how they are constructed and met. While this does not suggest a diminishment of the importance and necessity of medical assistance in ending chronic drug dependency, it does speak to the existence of conditions under which individuals perceive psychological needs as essential to their functioning or survival. While the psychological needs of these interview participants were met through the removal of need or the presentation of other options fulfillment, it is plausible that in instances in which neither the causation behind psychological needs nor the fulfillment of needs is satisfied, individuals would demonstrate a higher susceptibility toward recidivism.

Phase Three: Excavation and Re-Evaluation of Formative Experiences.

The third stage of desistance in participants' phasic model was a reconsideration of early, repeated, and internalized experiences situated within childhood and adolescence. This stage of distance differs from the others presented in this manuscript as a majority of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) participants offered robust descriptions of this stage as a necessary component of the desistance process (NC = 23), despite it not surfacing as an occurrence in the recollections and descriptions of desistance provided by their white counterparts (NC = 5). BIPOC interview participants who offered the excavation and re-evaluation of formative experiences described this engagement as creating an opportunity to remove or revise harmful and limiting assumptions in ways more efficient than what occurred under the practices described in Phase 2 (the revision of perspectives at junctures of cognitive incongruence; NC =

23). BIPOC interview participants had previously used the information gathered in critical early life moments as a touchstone and lens through which they appraised their abilities and options throughout their years of development and adulthood. The prevalence and consistency with which these participants received information from numerous and varied sources that communicated evidence of sentencing toward criminality (and incarceration as inevitable or deserved) resulted in the formative experiences of BIPOC interview participants operating as a basis for the limiting perspectives and criminal engagement that participants engaged in before and during adulthood (NC = 25).

By engaging with memories of formative experiences that they viewed as having launched their path toward criminality, BIPOC interview participants engaged with the tenet from which their limiting beliefs and other now-incongruent self-concepts grew with explicit intention reconsideration and reappraisal (NC = 23). Per the expressions of participants, by reconsidering the dynamics of these memories, they were able to find emancipation from the internalized constraints created in these critical moments (NC = 23) and became more keenly aware of the systemic operation of oppression (NC = 23). This increased awareness led to participants understanding how to combat the conditions of their experience more effectively (NC = 23), and how the authorities they had encountered in their youth operated as actors or agents of institutions that exist as branches of systemic and institutional oppression (NC = 23). Effectually, participants came to see themselves as having been harmed by systems whose strength rests primarily in the willing participation of those whom it subjugates. This shift in view resulted in most BIPOC interview participants coming to see the conditions created by these systems as alterable (NC = 23). This understanding then led to participants recalibrating

away from attempting to combat oppressive systems by targeting individuals they saw as representatives or beneficiaries of said systems (NC = 23).

The exclusion of white participants from this phase, while jarring, may speak to how criminality and the conditions of engagement in criminality are different for individuals who are not the target demographic of systemic oppression. Throughout this research, there was evidence that the journey into criminality differed as a result of how environments responded and interacted with individuals based on their demography. The demographic data collected during the survey portion of this research showed a correlation between there being a higher percentage of white participants in the survey sample (41.22% for the survey sample versus 16.67% in the interview sample) and a decrease in the average length of participants' most recent incarceration from 4.9 years to 1.9 years. Additionally, the same data set revealed that when the parameters of computation included a higher number of white respondents, by including all survey participants rather than just interview participants, there was a: 35.6% decrease in participants reporting incarceration before age 18, a 26.4% decrease in participants reporting arrests between the ages of 13 and 17, a 1.10% decrease in participants reporting arrests between the ages of 10 and 12, and a 9.28% decrease in participants reporting arrests between the ages of 5 and 9 (with zero white survey participants reporting).

These trends provide interpretative evidence of the possibility of variation between the dominant paths of entry into criminality experienced by white and BIPOC individuals. Exploration of the aforementioned possibility provides a plausible explanation for why most BIPOC interview participants needed to engage in this phase of desistance and ample consideration as to why their white peers did not.

In response to inquiries about whether formative experiences of their youth impacted their self-efficacy, white interview participants offered that there were instances in which they felt victim to individuals of authority (inclusive of teachers, family members, law enforcement) and institutions (such as family and criminal court systems). However, these participants did not feel that these experiences led to their criminality (NC = 5). Additionally, they did not attribute these instances as resulting in limiting self-concepts. Bandura's (1997) assertions provide a means of further explanation for differences of experience seen between these two groups of participants. Bandura (1997) explained that the existence of narratives and experiences that support conclusions individuals make about their ability work to influence the degree to which experiences and significant appraisals impact individuals' general and skill-specific efficacies.

While both white and BIPOC interview participants recalled specific moments of trauma in which they were made to feel inadequate, powerless, and/or limited in rights, talent, or ability, only the latter group described the reification of harm to self-concepts through direct and vicarious experiences. White interview participants instead offered that within environments in which they had experiences that were detrimental to their efficacy, there were experiences that provided counternarratives that left them with a sense of possibility, rather than limitation. Contrary to BIPOC interview participants, who identified the roots of their harmful self-concepts as existing in youth and adolescence, white participants described their arrival at limiting self-concepts as having occurred in or near adulthood. While observations of their aspirational models' and their peers' inability to overcome shared challenges and systemic limitations reified BIPOC interview participants' beliefs in the futility of subversive action, white interview participants observed the success of aspirational models whom they viewed as similar to themselves as being evidence of their impending success during the time of their youth (NC = 5).

White interview participants, in some cases, described their disorientation as being the result of seeing individuals whom they viewed as inferior to themselves progress beyond them in education (NC = 2) and financial achievement (NC = 4).

There is an assumption by the researcher that: if transformative learning is a process by which disorientation can lead to frames of reference becoming more "inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified" (Mezirow, 2000), there must be conditions under which frames of reference can also be transformed toward entitlement, xenophobia, belief in demographic supremacy and other forms of prejudice. These shifts in belief, which may have been strengthened or influenced by others' verbal persuasion, would work to explain what participants described as having been a growing resentment centered on others' attainments in areas in which white interview participants felt entitled by their race or citizenship (NC = 5).

In trying to better understand the reasons for differences in the desistance process between white and BIPOC participants in this study, Nerstrom's (2014) 4-phase sequential model may provide an explanation for the absence of Phase 3 in the desistance process of white participants. An application of Nerstrom's definition of experience (including everything in an individual's lifetime, environment, and interactions with others) to what participants described as their journey into criminality provided key differences and similarities between BIPOC and white participants. Social curricula shaped their self-concepts for both groups: generating and reinforcing self-concepts concretely tied to their expectations for interactions with the world (inclusive of institutions and authority figures) and their understanding of their abilities and limitations. Nerstrom (2014) categorizes this as assumptions—an active formation of values and beliefs informed by what individuals have been taught to expect from interactions with society

and the world, as well as an understanding of allowances and responses to our actions based upon what experience has taught us about how the different enclaves of society receive us.

Most BIPOC participants expressed that they experienced the imposition of influences that led to their limiting self-concepts before they had had an opportunity to develop self-efficacy (NC = 25). In the case of white interview participants, they experienced the ease of success they were then disoriented to find did not carry over into adulthood (NC = 5). White interview participants seem to have experienced an era of what Bandura described as detrimental success (1997). Whereas BIPOC interview participants experienced detrimental failure due to their youth experiences, white interview participants experienced easy successes and effectually expected success to require only minimum effort. In line with Bandura (1997), due to having been acculturated into expectations of easy success, white interview participants became discouraged by challenges that arose in their transition from their experience of youth and adolescence toward adulthood.

Further supporting this interpretation are white interview participants' recollections of being implicitly and explicitly taught that they were more deserving than others for reasons of racial identity (NC = 4) and what they were led to believe were natural talents and abilities that would be profitable and afford a wide array of choices and options (NC = 5). It was the perceptions of choice and options to maintain a daily standard of living by both BIPOC and white participants that later led to disorientation. Mezirow (2000) cites this disorientation as one that occurs when information from new experiences, both cognitive and affective, is reflected upon and individuals, as a result, challenge their deeply held assumptions and consider new perspectives. Considering this phenomenon through the lens of Nerstrom's third phase (2014), the challenging of perspectives begets an inquiry into how new experiences challenged

participants' deeply held assumptions and the role that identity played in both sets of occurrences. The majority of BIPOC interview participants seemed to have progressed through distinct stages of pre-desistance (criminality) and post desistance in which they moved from acculturated and limiting self-concepts into disorientation, then challenging of perspectives, and then into a generation or adoption of new self-concepts and identities (NC = 25). The challenge of perspectives, in turn, led to BIPOC participants' seeing new options as accessible by way of their new identities. White interview participants seem to have experienced an additional period of change in self-concept by virtue of their having experienced a period of high self-efficacy during their youth and adolescence. Thus, the progression for white interview participants appears to have three distinct stages, pre-criminality, pre-desistance (criminality), and desistance. These stages seem to include not one but two occurrences of disorientation that led to changes in self-concept, with the first occurrence initiating the transition into adulthood and criminality and the second initiating the desistance process.

For white interview participants, the negation of efficacy that resulted from their first disorientation manifested in at least one of two ways. The first manifestation is the carrying of a belief that their actions are futile due to the world, or specific actors within it, conspiring to prevent them from success. This reasoning produced feelings and perceptions of futility similar to those felt by BIPOC participants in their consideration of systemic barriers, albeit in response to a less pervasive reality that may have felt just as large, while still allowing white interview participants to keep their beliefs about—and personal appraisals of—their talent or ability intact. The second manifestation of the negation of white interview participants' long-held efficacy may have been a reconsideration of their talents and abilities. This second manifestation would be particularly disorienting for those who experienced it, as it would cause individuals to question

the honesty, integrity, motivation, or judgment of the appraisers whom participants held most dear, or in high esteem. The loss incurred by the re-evaluation and challenging of core beliefs, and the reduction in the perceived availability of options, made white interview participants increasingly susceptible to verbal persuasion due to feelings of shame, fear, and/or anger (NC = 5), similar to those outlined in Mezirow's second step of transformative learning (2000). An occurrence in which the disorientation of having assumptions challenged resulted in the adoption of new limiting self-concepts would explain white interview participants' descriptions of their feeling that there was a disappearance of the options associated with their previously held expectations and identities (NC = 5). With there being evidence throughout this study of linkages between the perceptions of options and self-identity, it is possible that, in ways similar to the experiences of BIPOC interview participants, the criminality of white interview participants was the result of their no longer being able to perceive traditional success as feasible due to belief in their inability or disfunction. White interview participants also potentially experienced a heightened level of loss or grief due to the sudden erasure of options previously perceived as available and taken for granted.

There was a curiosity on my part as to whether the negation of white interview participants' long-held self-concepts would result in moments of negative appraisal becoming more salient. Descriptions given by white interview participants suggest that they did not. They instead attributed the sources of their perceived inefficacy as being generated and existing in their adulthood (NC = 5). This may speak to the prevalence of positive appraisals continuing to overshadow or neutralize negative appraisals' impacts. It also suggests that white interview participants may have disregarded all appraisals from their youth and adolescence due to their having come to see the dominant narratives of their youth as erroneous.

Regardless of whether white interview participants came to see themselves as victims to a system that they perceived as too formidable to challenge or as lacking the talents and ability they previously perceived themselves to have, or a combination of the two, they experienced a shift in understanding that resulted in the generation of limiting self-concepts that rendered a belief in a reduced number of options. In this way, the experience of hindered efficacy and the generation or adoption of limiting self-concept that occurred for white interview participants parallels, even if only in principle rather than externally viewed magnitude, the youth and adolescence experiences described by BIPOC interview participants. With the root causes of violence and criminality for white interview participants paralleling in microcosm the experiences of most BIPOC participants, it is unsurprising that there is overlap in their descriptions of the desistance process.

With white interview participants having encountered limiting self-concepts at a later age than their BIPOC peers, it is surmisable that, upon their later generation or adoption of new non-criminalized identities, they were able to address the bulk of their perceived inefficacies and feelings of powerlessness through engagement in what participants across demographics offered as the second phase of desistance—engagement in the revising of perspectives to more fully inhabit their newly adopted personas and self-concepts.

While an analysis of the inclusion and exclusion of Phase Three from participants' narratives produced a majority and a subgroup that corresponded to individuals' demography, there would be a danger in using this study as explicit evidence of there being a generalized difference in the trajectories of white and BIPOC individuals toward criminality and away from criminality. It is equally, if not more likely, that age of entrance into limiting self-concepts, conditions that result in the inhibiting of self-efficacy, and belief in the futility of actions play a

more prominent role in determining the need to engage with formative memories than do race or ethnicity. It is plausible that white individuals who experience pervasive influences that inhibit the development of efficacy or communicate their limitations as connected to static attributes of their existence (e.g., disability or inherited poverty) would find the engagement of their formative experiences, if not necessary, then beneficial. Similarly, it is plausible that a BIPOC individual, for whom success came with relative ease during youth and adolescence, could resultantly experience a challenging of their assumptions in ways that cause a significant decrease in efficacy, even to the point of their experiencing a detrimental success (Bandura, 1997) in ways similar to this study's white interview participants. Where demography has a more significant impact is in determining the probability and degree to which individuals experience events that lead to, or support, the generation or adoption of limiting self-concepts that are then pervasively reified, as well as the frequency with which individuals observe what they interpret as evidence of their condition of futility in the lives of others.

Phase Four: Navigation of Somatic Responses

The fourth stage of desistance in the phasic model offered by participants was the navigation of their somatic responses with the explicit purpose of learning to disregard or suppress them. While the majority of interview participants (NC = 28) saw engagement in this phase as integral to their desistance, their need to consciously engage in the navigation of their somatic responses, despite having already engaged in the mining of formative experiences (NC = 24) and other phases described as being integral to desistance (NC = 27), is of particular interest. The fact that intentional navigation of somatic responses remained necessary, even after months or years of engagement in revision toward alignment with their chosen identities, begets why the navigation of somatic responses required participants to engage in undertakings beyond the other

steps of the desistance process. While the aforementioned consideration cannot be definitively addressed by this research, participants' descriptions provided possible explanations.

The first explanation of why somatic responses to stress persisted in ways that made participants feel prone to engage in violence may rest in somatic responses being instinctual rather than formally cognitive. With scenarios that elicit somatic responses heavily linked to feelings of threat or danger, participants were more inclined to rely on learned and historically effective, ingrained methods of securing safety as habitual responses than they were to engage in careful consideration of variables—especially during moments in which hesitation may have resulted in injury. An understanding of the stress of environmental factors that cause somatic responses provides insight into how awareness of somatic responses result in participants' reliance on ingrained methods of coping and return to prior paths of reasoning. Research indicates that people rely on what they determine to be large, general, and salient information rather than nuanced details during times of stress or duress, which leads to a narrower set of considerations (Beck et al., 1985; Ebbesen & Konečni, 1975; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Meichenbaum, 1977). This reduction in considered variables explains why less familiar or new concepts of how to handle or assess threat were less likely to be accessed during scenarios in which somatic responses were aroused. Additional support for the assertion that a reduction of considered variables meant a lesser likelihood of accessing new learning, newly formed strategies, praxis-based intentions, and decisions based on late perspectives is found in what resulted from participants' engagement in rehearsals of stress-inducing situations. In awareness of how the capacity for cognition becomes limited due to somatic arousal, participants successfully used imagined experiences to anticipate possible variables, methodically appraise options, and respond in ways of greater advantage than what they would have otherwise

defaulted to (NC = 24). As a result of their imaginings, these 24 interview participants saw improvement in their ability to suppress or disregard somatic responses (NC = 24). Once participants felt assured that they had an improved ability to address their physiological arousal as a result of their engagement in imagined experiences, they felt an increased amount of cognitive control (Bandura, 1988). Bandura (1988) found that perceived efficacy was a more significant determinant of whether individuals would access cognitive function during times of stress than their actual ability to impact their environment or mitigate a threat. It is unsurprising then that some participants found that each successful attempt at navigating somatic responses also increased their ability to identify and make nuanced considerations of a more significant number of variables during times of stress (NC = 20). Additionally, it also increased their ability to access their cognitive resources in planning for response to stress or threat, thus allowing for better alignment to their new identities and perspectives (NC = 24).

Other explanations for why participants still needed to adjust the impact of somatic responses may rest in examining what participants cited as triggers of somatic response. When participants were triggered by reminders of experiences in which they were directly harmed (NC = 25), some found there to be too significant of a difference in variables between current scenarios and either the formative experiences they had evaluated or the recalled experience of harm. Bandura (1997) supports this assertion by suggesting that the passing of time hinders the efficacy gained from encounters of threat at a rate equal to its variability. This type of reasoning may have led them to conclude that the solutions or plans of action they had generated in other post-event assessments could not be applied to mitigate or neutralize what they perceived as a present threat. It is probable then, in instances in which participants perceived similarity in their circumstances to occurrences in which harm came to others, that the benefit that comes from

mining their own formative experience is limited to the degree of overlap perceived by participants. With most formative experiences cited by participants having occurred during youth and adolescence, the likelihood of participants being able to draw connections across occurrences in ways that would inform current actions seems to be relatively small due to the difference of external circumstances and societal dynamics. In scenarios such as this one, per participants' descriptions of occurrences, the pressure and presence of threat further minimized participants' abilities to engage in a cognitive assessment and led to their reversion toward instinct. Under this premise, it is logical that participants would engage in imagining themselves in opposition to threats they had not directly experienced but that they had been made aware of through indirect experiences of vicarious or verbal influence (NC = 24). This practice is exercised as the ability and regularity with which people receive reportage, passively and actively, via multiple channels of personal media continues to increase.

Similarly, a close consideration of the somatic triggers described in interviews reveals that a larger number of participants reported being triggered by circumstances with perceptible similarity to events they had only heard about through word-of-mouth or news media (NC = 27) than the number that reported being triggered by circumstances in which they had directly experienced or witnessed harm by civilians (NC = 16). In line with what Bandura (1988) asserted regarding cognitive control, namely that there is a relationship between individuals experiencing higher levels of efficacy and the degree to which they can predict variables of consequence, the comparison of these two findings may validate the extent to which fear of threat, rather than the recurrence of threat, is a stronger or more common, catalyst of anxiety and somatic response.

Further supporting this interpretation are descriptions offered by interview participants of their somatic responses being triggered at the presence of individuals and groups of a specific

ethnicity or race due to perception of them as a threat (NC = 30). Worth noting is that each of the interview participants perceived individuals (NC = 5) or groups (NC = 30) of a specific race and ethnicity as potential threats as a result of word of mouth or media, rather than direct experience (NC = 0). Possible explanations for this may be that participants were able to differentiate individuals encountered in direct experiences based on an ability to assign reasoning, causation, motivation, and/or an ability to further categorize or assign attributes to an individual as a result of increased exposure to the individual and context of the encounter. Reification of prejudices may be strengthened by the pervasiveness of their being held as common truths by peers and society. Thus, acculturation and media descriptions of assailants through general descriptions of race and ethnicity shape the scope of whom an individual perceives as a threat. The result is that individuals develop a flawed ability to determine the attributes and indicators of an assailant. Magnified by recognition of the existence of threats due to information received from trusted others and media, flawed and general criteria for the identification of a threat ultimately leads to generalizable misapplications of attributes that can bear a likeness to any number of people.

White interview participants recounted instances in which individuals of color were portrayed as: having above average strength, individually aggressive, prone to theft and rape, and/or tolerant of physical pain (NC = 5). Black interview participants recounted accounts in which groups of white individuals beat, burned, raped, maimed, lynched, or drowned individuals of color as a form of entertainment (NC = 25). The narratives produced by white interview participants bore elements of an American brand of scientific racism. The attributes given as reasons for perceiving people of color as a threat are in alignment with arguments offered as justification for enslavement, colonization, tiered-rights, segregation, and stiffer criminal penalties evidenced in both American university curricula (Baptist, 2014; Brown, 1990; Harris et

al., 2019; Wilder, 2013), as well as propaganda that are traceable to Jim Crow Era literature (Carroll, 1990), media (Fredrickson, 1971; Griffith, 1915;) and advertisements for items such as knives, guns, and ammunition (Ferris State University, n.d.). The narratives produced by BIPOC interview participants referred to extra-judicial killings that grew in popularity alongside the eugenics movement and race science movement of the late 19th century, as well as similarities to protocols for the terrorism and successful enslavement of BIPOC produced at some of the nation's still leading universities (Baptist, 2014; Brown, 1990; Harris et al., 2019; Wilder, 2013).

Based on the prevalence with which the attributes and indicators of participants perceptions of threat are traceable to the American eugenics movement and scientific racism (Baptist, 2014; Harris et al., 2019; Wilder, 2013), participants' recollections of their identifications, and their proactive and post-active responses to threat, are evidence of the implicit and explicit curricula of their acculturation. This study surfaced a direct connection between the perception of threat, the somatic arousal responses of participants, and their inclination towards violence. This connection binds the narratives of criminality and limitation described by BIPOC participants and the narratives of entitlement and race superiority described by white participants to shared sourcing that cannot be held separate from the United States' history of slavery, colonization, genocide, and racial inequity.

The harmful perspectives of eugenics and science racism's continued replication; its adaptation into the American landscape, psyche, criminal justice system (Alexander, 2010; Anderson, 2016; Kendi, 2016; Kilgore, 2015; Muhammad, 2019; Rankine, 2014); and the invocation and reification of the Other (Said, 1979) as a threat is pervasive in both media (Hooks, 1992; Rony, 1996) and in what is perceived by the American consciousness as being proverbial wisdom (Mieder, 1997). Whether individuals who subscribe to these ideologies do so

due to exposure or if their adoption is the result of vested interest in security and survival. Bandura's (1977) third core learning process, motivation, serves as a probable reason for the retention and reproduction of the perception of others as a threat. The conclusion, therefore, is that fear plays a central role in a conscious continuance of the perspective that individuals of a specific race and/or ethnicity pose a threat. With the perception of threat being tied to somatic arousal, a disposition toward violence, and reliance on the consideration of only a few key variables (Beck et al., 1985; Ebbesen & Konečni, 1975; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Meichenbaum, 1977), it is logical to conclude that the anxiety and fear induced by perceiving individuals of other races and ethnicities as a threat may operate as a hindrance toward becoming and remaining criminally desistant. Moreover, based on the logic of this analysis, an argument can also be made that the reification of the current social curriculum (founded on American ideals of white supremacy) not only harms the individuals experiencing threat, but are exercised upon the bodies perceived *as* a threat. The distinction of racial superiority impacting systems philosophically and their applications in practice resulted in most BIPOC interview participants' exposure to trauma that led to cascading reductions of efficacy and the maturing of limiting self-concepts.

The influence of prevailing narratives of racial threat begets whether exposure to individuals that participants perceived as threats resulted in a re-evaluation of beliefs. Each of the interview participants responded that exposure did not influence outcomes regarding changes in their perceptions of Others as a threat (NC = 0). Instead, participants credited their management of somatic responses to the efficacy gained through experiences of non-desistance related success (NC = 21). Participants' expressions suggest that efficacy gained from other phases of desistance may be assistive in managing somatic responses. This concept aligns with Bandura's

(1988) assertion that perception of threat results from the relational property between potential harm and an individual's perceived coping capabilities, which are increased primarily through experiences of success and the gaining of general efficacy.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Despite the complexity and nuance of carceral push/pull factors, the predominance of the American incarceration epidemic, and the statistical likelihood of recidivism for incarcerated individuals, participants in this study were able to desist from criminality successfully. In searching for a fuller understanding of the desistance and transformative learning process that occurred for participants, what emerged as a necessary byproduct was further evidence and understanding of what participants perceived as having been the collective cause of their shared and individual criminality. In many cases, participants' descriptions point to there being a social-societal construction by which external entities often become conditioned to seeing individuals as criminals based on their attributes, such as ethnicity, race, or economic status. Participants' descriptions evidence the dynamism by which social curricula, oppressive systems, and early exposure to authorities operating as actors perpetuating each of these elements conditioned participants toward accepting and developing an imposed criminality. Thus, it is not surprising that participants describing their desistance draw attention to the mechanisms that previously prevented their engagement in the desistance process, and a process of transformative learning and desistance that mirrors the dynamism and complexity of the path toward criminality.

This research produced a great deal of insight into the desistance process of participants, inclusive of critical elements and occurrences that participants described as integral to their success—all of which led to participants' revision of harmful self-concepts, and as evidenced throughout this study, a generation and adoption of a new identity.

As a means of presenting the insights that emerge from this study in a distilled form for ease of access and application, this final chapter offers a formal set of conclusions as integrated

responses to the individual research questions posed at the start of this research, a revisiting of the assumptions offered in Chapter 1, recommendations for the field of adult education and future research. It then closes with the researcher's reflections on the study as a whole.

Conclusions: Integrated Responses to Research Questions

RQ1: Experiences Perceived as Fundamental Toward Desistance

Participants in this study offered a model of their desistance process that consists of four sequential phases (with each phase being perceived by a majority of the sample participants as being fundamental toward their desistance). While participants' articulations of these phases were linear and followed the same pattern of appearance, it is likely that phases beyond the first happened concurrently. While the consideration that follows is informed by interview participants' offering of the phases as being sequential, none of the participants' articulations suggest that entry into a phase meant an abandonment of the practices or logics of the former. Rather, entry into each phase resulted in an addition of perspectives and considerations that further supported their desistance.

The first phase was an experience of direct success in an endeavor separate from the goal of avoiding criminality. Efficacy gained from this experience of success often served dual purposes. The first purpose served by this event was that the occurrence was incongruent with deeply entrenched assumptions that served as the foundation of participants' limiting self-concepts. The result was a conceptual challenge to the immutability of conceptual constraints and logics under which participants operated and lived. The second purpose served by this event was that it inherently caused participants to perceive their identities as editable and, by doing such, presented them with a concept that would lead to their purposeful engagement in a purposeful selection and revision of identities.

The second experience offered by participants as integral to their desistance, which in this dissertation is categorized as Phase 2 of the phasic model offered by participants, was an engagement in the methodical revising of their perspectives. As the adoption or generation of new identities and self-concepts did not, in the case of participants, inherently mean that their views spontaneously changed, participants needed to engage in the critiquing and revising of their beliefs in order to arrive at and remain desistant. Participants cited that incongruence caused by their experiences of success described in Phase 1 led to their conclusion that the bulk of their perspectives stemmed from concepts that they formerly perceived as absolute truths. Motivated by the desire to inhabit their new identities more fully, and through this fuller inhabitation, gain greater access to the tools and options they saw as being connected to these identities—participants utilized daily life occurrences of incongruencies between the habits and perspectives of their former selves and those they imagined belong to their current selves as an opportunity to engage in revision. What is suggested by descriptions of experiences related to this phase is that success in this phase of desistance is heavily dependent upon participants having gained the space to engage in praxis Participants offered that cognitive space was the result of the experience described in Phase 1 and that their ability to engage in reflection came as a result of release from a state of survival. They described their release from a survival state as the result of challenging the beliefs that cognitive engagement and reflection operate as futile exercises with the conditions of their lives and identities presented as assigned and immutable, resulting in their being victims to harm or death.

In participants' description of Phase 2 is evidence that participants retained the belief that engagement in reflection could result in death due to inattention to threat. Despite this fear, as a result of their Phase 1 considerations, participants came to see engagement in reflective practice

as a means of navigating toward a chosen identity in ways that were not possible under the constraints of the spectrum of their previously perceived options.

The third experience offered by participants as integral toward their desistance, which in this dissertation is categorized as the third stage of the phasic model offered by participants, was a reconsideration of early, repeated, and internalized experiences situated within childhood and adolescence. The third experience differs from the aforementioned in several ways, with one of the most prominent differences being that while this experience was described as integral by most participants in this study, it did not appear in any of the interviews with white participants.

For nearly all BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) participants, the experience of engaging with their memories of formative experiences from childhood and adolescence was an integral part of their desistance process. Participants described this experience as creating an opportunity to remove or revise harmful and limiting assumptions in ways more efficient than what occurred under the practices described in Phase 2—the revision of perspectives at junctures of cognitive incongruence. Using the information gathered in critical early life moments as a touchstone and a lens through which they appraised their abilities and options throughout their years of development and adulthood, and using gathered information as definitive evidence of sentencing toward criminality and incarceration as inevitable or deserved, the formative experiences of participants operated as a basis for the limiting perspectives and criminal engagement that participants engaged in before and during adulthood.

By engaging with memories of formative experiences that they saw as beginning the path toward criminality, participants engaged with the tenet from which their limiting beliefs, and other now-incongruent self-concepts, emerge for the explicit reason of reconsideration and reappraisal. Per participants, by reconsidering these memories' dynamics, they were able to find

emancipation from the internalized constraints created in these critical moments and became more keenly aware of the systemic operation of oppression. This increased awareness led to participants understanding how to combat the conditions of their experience more effectively and how the authorities they had encountered in their youth operated as actors or agents of institutions that exist as branches of systemic and institutional oppression. Effectually, participants came to see themselves as harmed by systems whose strength rests primarily in the willing participation of those whom it subjugates. This shift in view resulted in participants coming to see the conditions created by these systems as alterable and recalibrating from inclinations to combat oppressive systems by targeting individuals they saw as representatives or beneficiaries of said systems.

The absence of this phase for white interview participants, while jarring, may speak to the conditions of engagement in criminality being different for individuals who are not the target demographic of systemic oppression. In alignment with Bandura (1997), it may also suggest that the degree to which interview participants' experiences and significant appraisals impact their general and skill-specific efficacies rests on the existence of narratives and experiences that further support conclusions about their ability. Some of the white interview participants readily identified a connection between their feelings of inability and criminality, offering that their lower socio-economic status played a role in their feeling unable to survive through non-criminal means. In contrast, others expressed that, for them, criminality was a choice. The former often used wealthy individuals, whom they regarded as peers by their shared race or ethnicity, as points of comparison from which they concluded themselves to be incapable of conventional success. The latter expressed that it was the choice to engage in criminality as recreation that led to their further engagement becoming necessary.

Further research is needed to determine whether the experiences offered by white participants in the study can be generalized to a larger population or if these participants represent a subset of specific experiences and outcomes. In either case, Phase 3 may not have been necessary for these participants due to their limiting self-concepts having started in adulthood. Thus, there may be a large group of white individuals who would need to engage in Phase 3 of the desistance process described by participants to remain desistant, in ways similar to what was experienced by BIPOC individuals who participated in this study.

The fourth experience offered by participants as integral toward their desistance, which in this dissertation is categorized as the fourth stage of the phasic model offered by participants, was an engagement in reflection on somatic responses in preparation for moments of stress. Engagement in reflection on somatic responses allowed participants to achieve at least one of two crucial goals: to eliminate or suppress bodily responses, and/or to disregard somatic responses in cases where cognizance of these responses would have led to their engagement in reactionary behaviors and actions. Participants described their engagement in reflection on their somatic responses as allowing them to think during times of cognitive paralysis that typically come from individuals' interpretation of their physiological activation as evidence of susceptibility to a high likelihood of dysfunction or vulnerability to a threat. For participants who had habitually engaged in violence, this experience of reflecting upon events or circumstances that may be triggering and anticipating their bodily responses through the curation and engagement of imagined scenarios, significantly reduced their likelihood of engagement in violence or criminality as a result of fear and it enabled participants to more fully consider alternative plans of action.

RQ2: The Role of Self-Perception and Self-Assessment in Desistance

The findings of this research underscore the critical role that self-perception and self-assessment play in desistance. The process of desistance described by participants began with the receipt of information, and a presentation of options that were incongruent with deeply entrenched assumptions and perspectives about participants had about themselves. Throughout their interviews, participants juxtaposed the limiting self-perceptions that they had been acculturated to since youth with the self-efficacy and revised self-concepts they came to have through a methodical and continuing reappraisal of their circumstance and habitual thoughts and actions.

The phasic model of desistance offered by participants further underscores how a significant shift in self-concept (i.e., the generation or adoption of a new identity) functioned as a launching point for self-assessment and the reappraisal of past experiences. Ultimately, participants arrived at lasting desistance, recognizable by others in the communities around them, resulting from their continued self-assessment and alignment toward more fully inhabiting their newly chosen identities.

Moreover, shifts in self-concepts caused participants to see options beyond those belonging to violence and criminality as they perceived their new identities as having options beyond those previously available to them. Participants described self-assessment as playing a crucial role in their remaining desistant during times of perceived threat or stress when it came to navigation of the somatic responses. Awareness of their physiological responses and the circumstances under which these responses were inclined to be triggered allowed participants to suppress or disregard somatic responses in instances where they may have otherwise reacted in violence.

Lastly, participants described their shifts in self-perception, and their resultant options, making them less susceptible to recruitment toward criminal action while also causing them to see their previously habitual engagements in violence and criminality as no longer tolerable. Examples of this emerge in participants' descriptions of their shift in self-concept as the cause for their deviation from a previous living style centered around their fight for essential resources. Participants' expressions also evidenced shifts in self-perception as catalysts toward their engagement in a purposeful process of reflecting on, reassessing, and reprioritizing their needs. Embedded in this response were even articulations by participants in which they relayed that they succeeded in overcoming drug dependencies because of perspective gained through their engagement with their new or refined intersections of identity and self-concept.

RQ3: Supports and Hindrances toward Desistance

While analysis of participants' interviews revealed desistance to be a profoundly personal and individual process, the descriptions of occurrences revealed by participants also revealed a web of influences that impacted self-perceptions and identity. Throughout the experiences shared by participants is evidence of their having extracted from implicit and explicit curricula understandings of their social allowances, expectations, capabilities, and limitations. Consistently, participants described their criminality as being the result of lessons received in the context of dealing with authorities representative of societal structure and institutions. They delineated the manner in which these authorities and other environmental narratives influenced their self-concepts in ways that resulted in the generation of psychological barriers to praxis. It is thus no surprise that from participants' descriptions emerged patterns in what influences they saw as being of support or hindrance toward their desistance.

This research documents at length the formation of cognitive barriers to desistance resulting from participants' acculturation into limiting self-concepts and conditioning toward existence in a state of survival that led to their habitual participation in violence and criminality. What must be presented in this response then is a summary of the external influences and circumstances that functioned as supports or hindrances of participants' desistance from the moment of inception.

Following the chronology of description for these supports and hindrances, verbal persuasion significantly impacted participants. In each case, participants' perception of the providers' motivation and expertise determined whether verbal persuasion acted as support or hindrance.

Verbal persuasion that influenced either participants' desires to, or belief that they could, desist from criminality were not directly related to the topic of desistance from criminality and took the forms of unsolicited advice, guidance, or commendation in which appraisers whom participants viewed as experts provided appraisals of participants having talent or ability. In further describing the conditions needed for this type of verbal exchange to function as a support, participants articulated that it was necessary that the appraiser have no knowledge of participants' criminal histories, and that their appraiser evaluated their talent or ability in reference to the performance of their non-criminalized peers. To have received an external appraisal as an indicator of success, talent, or ability, and the accompanying opportunities presented as authentic, participants required that their previous criminality not act as a modifier of the metric used for their appraisal. Any modification of metric or reference toward criminality inherently led participants to experience appraisals as a further concretization of their condition due to their perception of the modification as further evidencing the immutability of their

existence as criminals. In addition, participants were apt to dismiss appraisals by individuals they did not view as having experience or expertise in the areas they were assessing. This dismissal occurred when an appraiser did not meet a participant's criteria for impact upon their perceived efficacy in ways that would surface incongruence between criminal self-concepts and the freedom of options that belong to other identities. Further, participants often experienced appraisals and advice by well-intentioned friends and family as coded offerings of impatience or disapproval.

Another critical hindrance to desistance articulated by participants was perceived threat and its occupation of mental resources. Participants described criminality, incarceration, and post-incarceration release as sharing conditions that prevented engagement in the reflection necessary for desistance. In describing the circumstances created by residence in these spaces and the subsequent need to navigate ongoing safety and resource insecurity issues, participants offered that they did not have available mental resources to engage in the reflective or extended reasoning required for desistance. Moreover, participants described themselves as having been made dually unlikely to engage in the reflection necessary for desistance because of deeply entrenched assumptions about attempts to overcome or circumvent conditions of threat and insecurity as futile and endangering.

In conjunction, participants offered policies limiting individuals' movements post-incarceration by requiring that they remain in the same physical jurisdiction in which they engaged in criminal activity led by proximity to a multitude of threats that may have been otherwise avoidable if released individuals could relocate. Participants described how policies that forcibly returned and required them to remain in their neighborhoods inherently made it more difficult for them to engage in the reflective process of desistance post-release as a result of

the vast and exponentially increased number of threats and the expanding competition for essential resources that participants had to engage with upon their return.

While participants did not offer any specific external support as necessary for their desistance, they did offer that they experienced encouragement and deep satisfaction at others' recognition of their new identity and that this was, at times, helpful in overcoming the barrier of cognitive paralysis that resulted from an overwhelming need to work toward survival. Participants described others' unmodified recognition of their new identities as reinforcing the lines of options that participants saw as belonging to their new personas. Occurrences of this type resulted in participants more readily seeing themselves as having the options to engage in courses of thinking and action beyond the constraint of violence and criminality.

RQ4: Recommendations for Design and Engagement in Desistance Education

It is recommended that desistance education be improved by a separation from the topic of desistance. Within this research are multiple findings that point to how programming for desistance from criminality may be improved toward better outcomes.

Each of the interview participants has attested to success in endeavors separate from avoiding criminality as having led to reflection and changes in self-concept necessary for desistance (NC = 30). In connection to this, this study evidenced that attainment of discrete skills does little to nothing to influence self-efficacy. Thus, the resulting recommendation is that programming designed to support would-be desisters should give thought to the provision of content separate from the topic of desistance and not simply an exercise in attaining a discrete skill.

Moreover, most interview participants reported that they experienced an inability to engage in thinking that results in desistance due to lack of mental space exacerbated by programs

made mandatory as a stipulation of release (NC = 30). Thus, any programming intended to support reentry and/or desistance should consider ensuring that they have minimal compliance demands and an increase in opportunity for praxis. Concerning the expressed need for reflective space, programs operating as entities within the confines of incarcerated spaces and the community would both do well to consider ways of reducing the threat posed by the presence of other individuals. This may mean a reduced enrollment size, the use of settings that offer participants extended amounts of personal space, and/or the provision of options for different types of participation. Participation options may include independent research, presentation, mentoring, and/or partnering, to name a few.

With interview participants citing that both mandatory (NC = 23) and non-mandatory programming (NC = 21) were common settings for well-intentioned verbal persuasion serving as a hindrance, there is just cause to consider the stipulations for interaction offered by participants in this study. Namely, that roles should not be modified because of previous criminality (NC = 29) and that the performance of non-criminalized/unbound peers serve as the metric for an appraisal (NC = 29). Any individuals serving as facilitators would do well to undergo training that is responsive to these needs and to gain a nuanced understanding of how intersectionality and social curricula impact individual experiences. Training may also include content on verbal persuasion techniques, the science of their impact, and opportunities to understand better how efficacy, institutional prejudice, and perceived threat influence one another. Facilitator training might also be made increasingly reflexive through the use of focus groups and surveys that would be integral to preparing instructors to meet the needs of individual participants while informing a program's consideration of goals and activities for a particular cohort.

Moreover, in considering participants' voiced concerns of a need to have their talent or ability appraised in a relational context with their non-criminalized peers, it is logical to conclude that would-be desisters would benefit from opportunities to pursue interests as full and equal participants without the burden of carrying identifiers of their criminal history. In response to this, programs and organizations seeking to support desisters through education may shift from in-PIIs to pursue education alongside the general populace. This arrangement would differ notably from program partnerships currently in place at many universities, in which individuals at varying stages of incarceration or release access courses specifically designed for those with criminal histories. The advent of remote learning has made it so that incarcerated and non-incarcerated individuals can participate in courses of study alongside each other without creating awareness that some participate from carceral settings.

No matter the arrangement, based upon findings and the insights of this study, it is recommended that any attempt to provide individuals with education opportunities in efforts to support their desistance occurs in ways in which those with criminal histories can reap the benefits of anonymity from their pasts. This arrangement serves the interest of ensuring individuals are free to develop or adopt identities and personas separate from those to which they were previously captive while also reducing the possibility of others, both facilitators and fellow participants, from acting on bias in ways that negatively impact the experience and outcomes of those previously incarcerated.

It is also recommended that entities seeking to support desistance through education also consider how the scarcity of essential resources may prevent participants from engaging in coursework or learning experiences. Response to this recommendation by a university or other type of instructing institution may be robust enough to include a provision of housing,

stipends/scholarships, internships, opportunities to earn wages, mentorship, and job placement services. Alternatively, for smaller programs, this may mean an expressed commitment to ensuring that food is abundant; transit passes; and insofar as is possible, there are opportunities to discreetly access support for the navigation of other essential needs, including but not limited to clothing and hygiene products.

Lastly, it should not be overlooked that, despite their positive shifts in perspective and the negation of harmful self-concepts, most interview participants still saw engagement in the conscious navigation of their somatic responses as necessary for their continued desistance. This research suggests that triggers of somatic responses cannot be generalized to specific common triggers. Instead, this research evidences that triggers of somatic response and the perception of threat are highly personalized. Though an approach that seeks to address every possible somatic trigger would be ineffective, the participants' practice of preparing for variability through altering elements of likely scenarios suggests that desistance education programs may effectively prepare participants to navigate the discomfort of somatic responses, while also preparing them to access learned coping strategies during moments when they perceive threat. Based on interview participants' descriptions, one way of accomplishing this may be through engagement of imagined scenarios. During these exercises, much in the way university students examine ethical dilemmas, participants would offer and analyze their most salient impulses with respect to given scenarios, and offer alternatives, before being asked to re-analyze based on changes in circumstance.

Revisiting of Assumptions

There were four assumptions noted in Chapter 1. The first assumption, embedded in this research's central inquiry question, was that individuals who remained desistant and defied the

statistical likelihood of recidivism succeeded due to their having taken purposeful action toward making behavioral changes based on their learning. This assumption proved to be true to a degree beyond that which I had anticipated. Not only were desistant individuals successful in their desistance because of purposeful action toward behavioral change based on their learning, but they came to hold praxis—a continual cycle of learning and subsequent action—as a priority for their existence beyond their previous criminality.

Additionally, there was an assumption that the learning antecedents of participants' actions and behavioral changes would be observable and identifiable. Participants' descriptions evidenced that they observed their learning antecedents and could draw connections between the causes that necessitated particular learnings and their learning consequences. Descriptions gave particular attention to how participants' learning triggered openness to further learning and begot revision of even their most deeply embedded assumptions.

The formation and selection of methods for this research occurred under the assumption that participants would represent their histories and learning experiences accurately during the interviews. This assumption's accuracy is also readily evidenced in participants' ability to offer descriptions of critical events and occurrences in great detail, with consistency, throughout lengthy interviews.

There was an assumption that the skew of individual perception and imagined recollection(s) would be kept minimal by utilizing a cross-case analysis method. The alignment between participants' descriptions of their desistance process, and emergence of clearly delineated phases that had ample support across interviews, suggests that assumptions of the methods' applicability proved true.

Lastly, during the analysis portion of this research, a previously unrecognized assumption emerged. In line with most literature on desistance (Laub & Sampson, 2001), I assumed that participants would have experienced their most significant revisions in the moral-ethical domain. I thought about desistance as requiring a revision of the assumptions that individuals use to determine what constitutes right or wrong, how they act on their views of goodness, and the extent to which they see themselves as responsible for advocating for justice. This assumption was inaccurate. Participants evidenced the most significant change in their Psychological and epistemic habits. Participants' moral-ethical habits were not widely misaligned and often not incongruent with new identities. Instead, their habits were made conditional by, and responsive to, the presence of constrained choice. This leads me to conclude that criminality—in line with participants' statements—is a matter of circumstance, and in many senses, a symptom of complete oppression rather than a preference exercised by individuals.

Recommendations for the Field of Adult Learning

Applying adult learning lenses to the social issues of mass incarceration and recidivism allowed for rarely heard emic perspectives on issues that etic approaches have done little to address over a century (Laub & Sampson, 2001). Research on desistance policy and practice reveals that the advisement given by individuals traditionally regarded as having expertise on social welfare and criminal reform have often provided advisement to the detriment of the very individuals they are aiming to serve. While the carceral system carries a declared purpose of rehabilitation and reintegration, the current outcomes of the system evidence its existence as a mechanism that hinders individuals' abilities to develop the identities, self-concepts, and perspectives that would allow them to function as reasoning participants in the dictation of the conditions under which they operate in their daily lives.

Participants' descriptions throughout this research evidenced how criminality is an outward symptom of the same inequality and constrained choices that result in members of historically oppressed communities experiencing frequent and rising issues of violence, physical and mental illness, substance dependence, and abuse.

While there are unlimited applications of adult learning and infinite ways in which the field can address economic, societal, and even political interests by improving human performance, research within the field of adult learning — in particular transformative learning — still bears the disruptive, emancipatory, and socially reformative focuses of its early influences (Freire, 1970; Habermas, 1971, 1984; Kuhn, 1962). Built on theories and concepts of theorists who examined cataclysmic shifts in development, identity, and perspective, the field is latent with the potential to be used as a tool for societal betterment — even if only as a tool for supporting the emancipation of individuals from the captivity of limiting and harmful self-concepts.

In line with this, each of the interviewed participants underscored the importance of their engagement in praxis both as a vehicle toward both transformative change and arrival at desistance from criminality. Yet what should not be overlooked is that, for the majority of participants, even after the adoption of new identities, there remained a need to engage with the formative experiences that resulted in limiting self-concepts. To this end, scholarship that provides strategies and exemplars for supporting the formation of positive social identities in spite of internalized narratives of futility (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011), and theories of adult learning that center the conscious reconsideration of lived experiences as a means of disrupting acculturated patterns of meaning-making while encouraging the formation of new perspectives

of the self (Daloz, 1986), may be a valuable asset. Each may be of use in coming to a further understanding of how individuals at risk of recidivism may be further supported.

Furthermore, considering the significant role that formative youth and adolescent experiences played in interview participants' arrival at adult criminality (NC = 30), there is ample reason to consider the manners in which the field of Adult Learning is uniquely positioned. In its growing understanding of how acculturated concepts impact adults' development, reasoning, and meaning-making in ways that suggest there would be a benefit to partnering with colleagues in K-12 instruction and education justice to combat harmful social curricula and education policies that result in conditions of dehumanization.

Recommendation for Future Research

With this research sitting firmly in stride with an emerging practice and application of adult learning as a means of understanding desistance, the findings, analysis, and conclusions of this study provide ample opportunity for further analysis. In line with the insights that emerged, the research begets whether and how those who belong to historically oppressed communities might experience the path to criminality differently than their peers who belong to groups that have historically benefited from economic opportunity and other predicates of structural racism in the United States.

Moreover, expanding this research to include individuals across areas of the United States would further this research's dimensionality in ways that may allow practitioners and organizations to methodically provide support in alignment with the further examination of the phasic model offered by participants and expanded consideration of the desistance process.

Next, it is recommended that future researchers consider the modes of integration through which participants make sense of received information. The manners in which individuals

integrate efficacy information varies, and their processing patterns can often be traced (Andersson, 1981; Surber, 1984). Determining whether individuals are more inclined to integrate efficacy information additively, through a relative weighting, or as a multiplicative combination, in which the impact of conjoint efficacy appraisal factors is exponentially higher than under an additive rule, may assist in understanding why some occurrences play a more significant role in the formation of self-concept than others. Alternatively, configural combinations in which factors are designated weights relative to the availability of other sources of information may provide insight into how social learning plays a role in individuals maintaining harmful self-concepts in the absence of direct representatives of institutional authority.

Researchers such as Beck et al. (1985), Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Meichenbaum (1977), and Ebbesen and Konečni (1975) supporting this research's findings. They found that while people are prone to complex judgments in hypothetical scenarios, distress impairs cognitive functions in ways that make individuals prone to fall back on a few salient judgments in lived situations. Further research on the manners in which individuals with histories of violence have navigated the somatic responses, in ways comparable to the actions taken by participants in this study, in order to combat their reduction of considerations during moments of threat or challenge, has promise for furthering the reach and application of this research toward criminality prevention and desistance support.

Lastly, the need for internet-enabled devices and lack of internet access were significant barriers to participation in the study and presumptively impacted the demographic of the sample. This barrier could have resulted in a skew in age, location, socio-economic status, or other categories of attributes. Alterations that would provide additional avenues of insight into the trends and patterns surfaced during this research include: (a) removing the aforementioned

barrier by conducting the study in person; (b) conducting this study with a larger number of participants; (c) bounding the research in narrower demography; and/or (d) altering the methodology to make allowance for the exploration of key findings through the use of focus groups.

Researcher's Reflections

I approached this research with the belief that an understanding of the role learning plays in the desistance process would help society move from a recursive conversation about the presence of mass incarceration toward a commitment to actions that would bring the American carceral problem to an end. I have seen my community, and communities like it, ravaged by the realities of social violence, institutional cruelty, and incarceration. I have seen the trauma of carceral circuitry that pervasively governs and mandates the acceptance of subhuman living conditions by its citizenry. I have seen how implicit and explicit curricula work to debilitate individuals and collectives by poisoning their individual and collective self-concepts. In many ways, this study is a calibrated and overdue response to the harm caused by social and scientific racism produced by the American university system and its partners. It is simultaneously a response to the academic and practitioner biases that have been created by, and pervasively emanate from, every aspect of American culture as a result.

Having the privilege of interviewing the participants of this study and, throughout the interviews, had the trajectories of criminality and desistance drawn before me, I am further taken aback by the few degrees of separation between criminality and everyday living.

Having gained insight and perspective into the manners in which the web of formative experiences and influences can work to virtually extinguish self-belief, the ability to reason towards future outcomes, and even hope, I am more keenly aware of how realities including lack

of opportunity, economic disenfranchisement, and resource scarcity continue to act as the potent generators of criminal outcomes.

While my engagement in this research has further illuminated the systems and modes through which many are steered toward and kept in the cycles of violence and criminality, I hope that the emergence of critical insights on desistance from the testimony of individuals who have overcome the statistical likelihood of recidivism provides myself and others entry into more informed research, practice, and living.

As I bring the presentation of this research to close and reflect on my own experience of the inquiry process, I am left a staunch advocate that there remains a debt owed by academia to act in correction of the damage for which it has been directly responsible and for the times it has stood idly witnessing harm. While this dissertation is a humble step on a long and collective journey toward more just and equitable realities, I shall carry the lessons of this research as both a reminder and evidence of what is possible in the years to come.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form and Participant Rights for Survey

Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street New York NY 10027
212 678 3000

Protocol Title: Understanding the Desistance of Formerly Violent Offenders — An Adult Learning Perspective
Principal Researcher: Shokry Eldaly at se2278@columbia.edu and 718-926-6750

INTRODUCTION You are invited to participate in this research study called "Understanding the Desistance of Formerly Violent Offenders — An Adult Learning Perspective." You may qualify to take part in this research study because:

1. You desisted from criminality, which this study defines as having been free of criminal activity for at least five years.
2. You self-identify and are legally recorded as having been guilty of a class A or B felony.
3. You are willing and capable of completing a 15-minute survey.
4. You are willing to participate in a 60 - 120-minute interview about your survey responses and learning experiences related to your desistance.
5. You are between the ages of 22 and 46.

Approximately thirty people will participate in this study and it will take a maximum of three hours of your time to complete over the course of two days.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE? This study is being done to examine the learning experiences of individuals formerly categorized as violent offenders in New York State. The goal is to better understand participants' desistance from criminality as a learning process.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY? If you decide to participate in this study:

You will have the opportunity to participate in a 15-minute survey in which you provide demographic information and other informational data related to your incarceration and desistance.

If, based on your survey responses, you meet the research criteria and indicate that you have an interest in being contacted to participate in a 60 - 120 minute interview, the primary researcher may contact you by email or phone to conduct an face-to-face interview via Zoom.

Participants selected for interviews will be asked about their learning experiences as related to their desistance from crime. During the interview you will be asked about your learning

experiences as related to your desistance from criminality. The principal researcher will ask follow-up questions for context and insight into your learning experiences. Additionally, the principal researcher will ask questions about what, if any, factors you perceive as influencing or having influenced your desistance.

During the interview, you will also be asked:

- ○ About experiences you see as fundamental toward your desistance.
- ○ About supports and hindrances that have impacted your experience of avoiding criminality.
- ○ To generate a visual representation of your post-incarceration experience on an illustrative timeline.
- ○ To explain and give context for what you may generate on the illustrative timeline and for other articulations about your experiences and perspectives.

This interview will be audio-recorded. After the audio recording is written down (transcribed) the audio recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will still be able to participate. The researcher will just take hand-notes. The interview will take approximately sixty to one-hundred and twenty minutes.

In order to participate in the survey, you must use the alpha-numeric pseudonym that will be assigned to you upon completion of this survey. This pseudonym is being used in order to keep your identity confidential.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. However, there are some risks to consider. You might feel that certain experiences are too painful or traumatic to discuss. You do not have to answer any questions or share anything you do not want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.

It is important to know that your information will be kept confidential. You will not be required to reveal confidential information. You will not be asked to offer any information that will make you identifiable. As a precaution, the researcher will review all data and materials to ensure that identifying indicators are deleted and removed. In addition to data being de-identified, any findings will be reported thematically and in aggregate.

Additionally, the primary researcher is taking precautions to keep all information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing participants' identities. All digital data will be kept on a password-protected computer, and all printed information will be locked in a file drawer.

WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS

STUDY? There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of Adult Learning to better understand the best way to fight recidivism.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY? You will not be paid to participate. There are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY The primary researcher will keep all written or printed materials locked in a desk drawer in a locked office. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored on a computer that is password protected. What is on the audio recording will be written down and the audio recording will then be destroyed. There will be no record matching your real name with your alpha-numeric pseudonym. Regulations require that data from this study be kept for three years after the completion of the study.

For quality assurance the primary researcher, the study sponsor, and/or members of the Teachers College Institutional Review Board (IRB) may review the data collected from you as part of this study. Otherwise, all information obtained from your participation in this study will be held strictly confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by U.S. or State law.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED? The results of this study will be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your identity will be removed from any data you provide before publication or use for educational purposes. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published. This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the primary researcher.

WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

❑ I consent to allow data I provide in this survey to be viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College, Columbia University

❑ I **do not** consent to allow data I provide in this survey to be viewed at an education setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College, Columbia University. I acknowledge that this ends my participation in this study.

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the primary researcher, Shokry Eldaly, at 718-926-6750 or at se2278@columbia.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 10027, Box 151. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

- I have read the Informed Consent Form.
- I have been provided ample opportunity to review the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at the researcher's professional discretion. Conditions under which this may occur are (1) if information I provide is not pertinent to what is being asked, (2) if I express or show signs of danger to myself or others.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the researcher will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- Identifiers may be removed from the data. De-identified data may be used for future research studies or distributed to another researcher for future research without additional informed consent from you (the research participant or the research participant's representative). I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent Form document.

My clicking below indicates my agreement to participate or decline participation in this study:

❑ I agree to participate in this study per what has been outlined through this informed consent.

❑ I do not agree or no longer wish to participate (end participation).

Appendix B

Pre-Interview Survey

Understanding the Desistance of Formerly Violent Offenders — An Adult Learning Perspective

Question #	Prompt	Responses	Directions
Q1	Current Age:	❑ Open Response (Numerical 1 - 100) ❑ Decline/Skip	Please respond with a numerical # between 1 and 100.
Q2	Please indicate your race:	❑ Black / African American ❑ White ❑ Hispanic / Latino ❑ Indigenous /American Indian ❑ Write in if you wish to further Specify — (Optional Open Response) ❑ Other, including if not appropriately represented — (Optional Open Response) ❑ Decline/Skip	Please check/respond to as many as you feel applicable. Respondents may select pre-slotted responses AND/OR provide a written response.
Q3	Please indicate your biological sex:	❑ Male ❑ Female ❑ Write in if you wish to further Specify — (Optional Open Response) ❑ Other, including if not appropriately represented — (Optional Open Response) ❑ Decline/Skip	Please check/respond to as many as you feel applicable. Respondents may select pre-slotted responses AND/OR provide a written response.
Q4	Please indicate your gender:	❑ Male ❑ Female ❑ Non-Binary ❑ Write in if you wish to further Specify — (Optional Open Response)	

		❑ Other, including if not appropriately represented — (Optional Open Response) ❑ Decline/Skip	
Q5	What is the highest level of education that you have completed?	❑ Did not complete high school ❑ High school diploma/GED/TASC ❑ Bachelor's degree ❑ Master's degree ❑ Doctorate ❑ Professional degree ❑ Decline/Skip	Please check/respond to as many as you feel applicable. Respondents may select pre-slotted responses AND/OR provide a written response.
Q6	Please indicate any religions of which you are a practitioner:	❑ Christian ❑ Buddhist ❑ Hindu ❑ Muslim ❑ Jewish ❑ Write in if you wish to further Specify — (Optional Open Response) ❑ Other, including if not appropriately represented — (Optional Open Response) ❑ Not Religious ❑ Decline/Skip	Please check/respond to as many as you feel applicable. Respondents may select pre-slotted responses AND/OR provide a written response.
Q7	Please Indicate Your Preferred Language:	❑ English ❑ Spanish ❑ Tagalog ❑ Vietnamese ❑ Arabic ❑ Chinese ❑ Greek ❑ French ❑ Korean ❑ Russian ❑ German ❑ Haitian Creole	Please check/respond with what you feel is your preferred language. Respondents may select a pre-slotted response OR provide a written response.

		❑ Write in if you wish to further Specify — (Optional Open Response) ❑ Other, including if not appropriately represented — (Optional Open Response) ❑ Decline/Skip	
Q8	Please indicate length and location of your most recent incarceration:	❑ My most recent incarceration was a duration of (fill in length of incarceration) and served in (fill in State) ❑ Not Applicable (I was never incarcerated) ❑ Decline/Skip	Please list only your most recent incarceration.
Q9	Please indicate your age at the start of your most recent incarceration:	❑ How old were you at the start of your most recent incarceration? (Open response, Numerical) ❑ Not Applicable (I was never incarcerated) ❑ Decline/Skip	
Q10	Do you today identify as having been guilty of the crime for which you were sentenced to your most recent incarceration?	❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Unsure ❑ Not Applicable ❑ Decline/Skip	
Q11	Were you incarcerated as a result of a conviction that is classified as a Class A or B Felony?	❑ Yes, my incarceration was for a class A or B Felony ❑ No. ❑ Unsure ❑ Decline/Skip	Please select the appropriate response.
Q12	Have you been incarcerated More than once?	❑ Yes ❑ No/Not Applicable ❑ Decline/Skip	

Q13	Were you ever incarcerated or adjudicated before the age of 18?	❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Not Applicable ❑ Decline/Skip	
Q14	Please indicate ages at which you were arrested and how many times you were arrested the represented span of years:	❑ 1-4 o Number of times arrested: __ ❑ 5-9 o Number of times arrested: __ ❑ 10-12 o Number of times arrested: __ ❑ 13-17 o Number of times arrested: __ ❑ 18-22 o Number of times arrested: __ ❑ 23-27 o Number of times arrested: __ ❑ 27-30 o Number of times arrested: __ ❑ 31-40+ o Number of times arrested: __ ❑ Decline/Skip	Click on age bands that correspond to your age(s) of arrest. Then provide the number of times you were arrested within selected age bands. If you are unsure about the age(s) at which you were arrested or the number of times you were arrested, please offer your best guess.
Q15	Number of years since last involved in a criminal action:	❑ Numerical Drop Down (1 - 100)	
Q16	Are you willing and able to participate in a 60+ minute interview regarding the above responses and learning experiences related to your time since your last incarceration?	❑ Yes, please contact me at (insert phone number or email). If yes, you will be contacted and referred to strictly by the alpha-numeric participant number you were assigned for this survey. • If Yes is selected the following message appears: "please write down and keep this alpha-numeric pseudonym: XXXXXX. This will be used if you are selected for an interview." ❑ No/Decline/Skip	

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form and Participants' Rights for Interview

Protocol Title: Understanding the Desistance of Formerly Violent Offenders — An Adult Learning Perspective
Principal Researcher: Shokry Eldaly at se2278@columbia.edu and 718-926-6750

INTRODUCTION You are invited to participate in this research study called "Understanding the Desistance of Formerly Violent Offenders — An Adult Learning Perspective." You may qualify to take part in this research study because:

1. You desisted from criminality, which this study defines as having been free of criminal activity for at least five years.
2. You self-identify and are legally recorded as having been guilty of a class A or B felony.
3. You willingly and capably completed the aforementioned survey.
4. You are willing to participate in a 60 - 120 minute interview about your survey responses and learning experiences related to your desistance.
5. You are between the ages of 22 and 46.

Approximately thirty people will participate in this study and it will take a maximum of three hours of your time to complete over the course of two days.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE? This study is being done to examine the learning experiences of individuals formerly categorized as violent offenders in New York State. The goal is to better understand participants' desistance from criminality as a learning process.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY? If you decide to participate in the interview portion of this study, the principal researcher will interview you for a period of 60 to 120 minutes. The interview will be conducted face to face via Zoom.

During the interview you will be asked about your learning experiences as related to your desistance from criminality. The principal researcher will ask follow-up questions for context and insight into your learning experiences. Additionally, the principal researcher will ask questions about what, if any, factors you perceive as influencing or having influenced your desistance.

- During the interview, you will also be asked:
- About experiences you see as fundamental toward your desistance.
- About supports and hindrances that have impacted your experience of avoiding criminality.

- To generate a visual representation of your post-incarceration experience on an illustrative timeline.
- To explain and give context for what you may generate on the illustrative timeline and for other articulations about your experiences and perspectives.

This interview will be audio-recorded. After the audio recording is written down (transcribed) the audio recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will still be able to participate. The researcher will just take hand-notes. The interview will take approximately sixty to one-hundred and twenty minutes. You have received an alpha-numeric pseudonym and will be only referred by this pseudonym in order to keep your identity confidential.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. However, there are some risks to consider. You might feel that certain experiences are too painful or traumatic to discuss. You do not have to answer any questions or share anything you do not want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.

It is important to know that your information will be kept confidential. You will not be required to reveal confidential information. You will not be asked to offer any information that will make you identifiable. As a precaution, the researcher will review all data and materials to ensure that identifying indicators are deleted and removed. In addition to data being de-identified, any findings will be reported thematically and in aggregate.

Additionally, the primary researcher is taking precautions to keep all information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing participants' identities. All digital data will be kept on a password-protected computer, and all printed information will be locked in a file drawer.

WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of Adult Learning to better understand the best way to fight recidivism.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY? You will not be paid to participate. There are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY The primary researcher will keep all written or printed materials locked in a desk drawer in a locked office. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored on a computer that is password protected. What is on the audio recording will be written down and the audio recording will then be destroyed. There will be no record matching your real name with your alpha-numeric pseudonym. Regulations require that data from this study be kept for three years after the completion of the study.

For quality assurance the primary researcher, the study sponsor, and/or members of the Teachers College Institutional Review Board (IRB) may review the data collected from you as part of this study. Otherwise, all information obtained from your participation in this study will be held strictly confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by U.S. or State law.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED? The results of this study will be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your identity will be removed from any data you provide before publication or use for educational purposes. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published. This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the primary researcher.

CONSENT FOR AUDIO AND OR VIDEO RECORDING Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, **you will still be able to participate** in this research study.

❑ I give my consent to be recorded
❑ I **do not** consent to be recorded

WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

❑ I consent to allow written and audio-recorded materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College, Columbia University
❑ I **do not** consent to allow written and audio-recorded materials viewed outside of Teachers College, Columbia University

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?
If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the primary researcher, Shokry Eldaly, at 718-926-6750 or at se2278@columbia.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 10027, Box 151. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University

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PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

- I have read the Informed Consent Form and have been offered the opportunity to discuss the form with the researcher.
- I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.

- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at the researcher's professional discretion. Conditions under which this may occur are (1) if information I provide is not pertinent to what is being asked, (2) if I express or show signs of danger to myself or others.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the researcher will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- Identifiers may be removed from the data. De-identified data may be used for future research studies or distributed to another researcher for future research without additional informed consent from you (the research participant or the research participant's representative). I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent Form document.

My clicking below indicates my agreement to participate or decline participation in this study:

❑ I agree to participate in this study per what has been outlined through this informed consent.

❑ I do not agree or no longer wish to participate (end participation).

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

(with Embedded Critical Incident Protocol for use with the Illustrative Timeline Tool)

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Introduction</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">● Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. My name is Shokry Eldaly, and I am the principal researcher in this study. As you may know, I am conducting this research for inclusion in my doctoral dissertation. The focus of this research is on the journey, experiences, learnings, and perspectives of individuals who formerly categorized as violent offenders who are no longer involved in criminality.

● As discussed in our review of the participant rights form, your responses, comments, drawings, and visual representations are for research purposes only. All of the data collected from your participation in this research will remain strictly confidential. As stated earlier, audio-recording will start and stop only with your approval. This interview will take between 60 and 120 minutes, and you are free to end the interview and/or decline to answer at any time.

● During this interview, I am not evaluating you or your experiences. I am solely seeking to gain insight into your learning experiences as they occurred for you.

● Do you have any questions or concerns so far?

● If there are no further questions or comments, may I begin recording?

● May I start the interview?</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Formal Interview Begins</th></tr>
<tr><th>Questions</th><th>Potential Probes</th></tr>
<tr><td>Q1. Can you tell me a little bit about your most recent incarceration?</td><td>● What were your thoughts on the prospect of reentry?
● What, if any, concerns about reentry did you have during your incarceration?
● Were these concerns stronger at some points than others?
● What, if any, hopes did you have for (or what things you were looking forward to about) reentry?
● Were these hopes stronger at some points than others?
● How did, if at all, these elements, occurrences, programs, experiences that occurred during your incarceration influence your thinking and actions on release?
○ Which, if any, of these influences impacted you in the time that came after your release?</td></tr>
</table>

Q2. What was the process of your release from incarceration?	● Describe for me the experience of being released from incarceration. ● What were you thinking? ○ What did that mean to you? ○ What made you think that? ● What were you feeling? ○ What did that mean to you? ○ How did you interpret those feelings/sensations? ● Did you feel at the time that you would end up returning to incarceration? ○ What were the implications of that? ○ What factors influenced your thinking?
Q3. As you think about your experience since the time of release, to what do you accredit the fact that you've been able to avoid reoffending?	● How is this different from your prior thinking? ● Where did this insight originate? Where did it come from? ● What made you realize that? ● What made you believe this was true? ● What were your thoughts at the time as to whether you had the ability to stick to or follow that advice and/or plan?
Q4. Is there anything else you would accredit your success in this regard to?	● How is this different from your prior thinking? ● Where did this insight originate? Where did it come from? ● What made you realize that? ● What made you believe this was true? ● What made you believe that you had the ability to stick to or follow that advice and/or plan?

Introduction of Illustrative Tool and Critical Incident Protocol

- Thank you for sharing those thoughts with me. Now that we've laid some groundwork about your experiences, and I now have some insight into your perspectives, I'd like to ask you to create a timeline for which, for this research, we're calling an illustrative tool.
- You'll notice that the timeline represents the passage of time and that time is marked in one-year increments.
- In a moment, I'm going to ask you to draw a line that represents your desistance journey. The starting date of that journey will be for you to decide.
- The application will also allow you to erase and/or make changes to the timeline. The reason for this is that you may want to make changes as we speak. During our discussion, you may remember things that you want to add, and that is also welcome.

Ultimately, this exercise does not require a perfect representation of your journey. What you illustrate is just a means of us having a clear set of talking points.

- During our consideration of your illustrative timeline, we're going to use a critical incident protocol. What this means is that once you've drawn your line, I will ask you questions intended to provide you with an opportunity to describe and give context for what you've illustrated. You can also write notes or draw pictures along your timeline if that would be helpful. You are not required to provide any information that you don't feel comfortable sharing. Also, you can decline to respond to any of my questions at any time without penalty.

- Do you have any questions?

- If there are no remaining questions or comments, I invite you to complete the timeline now. There is no time constraint. Reflection such as this can take time. You may or may not illustrate occurrences that we've already discussed in our interview. That is all right as well. If it occurs that you graph occurrences that we've already spoken about, I will ask you more questions about it as part of the critical incident protocol. You may begin. Please take as much time as you need.

Critical Incident Protocol (*repeating questions repeat as appropriate for each point of interest)*	
Questions	Possible Prompts
Q5. Before I ask any questions, can you walk me through the journey that you've illustrated?	
Q6. Having illustrated your journey, what or when did you choose as your starting point?	● What made this significant? ● When you consider the before and after of this occurrence/event/happening, how are things different or the same? ○ What about with regards to your thinking? ○ How did this occurrence or event change things, if at all? ○ Would you respond the same way if this happened again? ● What happenings, reasonings, or logic, if any, changed how you felt about your capability in this moment? ● What influencing factors, if any, were you considering or impacted by? ● As you describe the moment/occurrence, can you tell me what you were thinking and feeling? ● What factors went into your thinking?

	● Who, if anyone else, would you describe as being involved? ○ How did that involvement impact your thinking, actions, emotions? ● How would you describe what changed? ○ How/why did that change happen? ○ What led up to it? ● How, if at all, would this event/action/thinking influence your thinking or actions moving forward? ● If we were to remove [insert influence], how, if at all, would that have changed the outcome? ● How, if at all, did this change how you saw yourself? ● What support or barriers were present? ● How did this/these make you feel? ○ Why was that the case? ● Looking back, what is important about this? ● How did you know this/that? ● What learning, if any, occurred then/here? ● What support or hindrances were present?
Repeating Question/Prompt (Q7A/B): Q7A. As we review what you've illustrated, narrate the journey to help me understand what is most significant. Q7B. Let's continue on the timeline.	● What made this significant? ● When you consider the before and after of this occurrence/ event/happening, how are things different or the same? ○ What about with regards to your thinking? ○ How did this occurrence or event change things, if at all? ○ Would you respond the same way if this happened again? ● What happenings, reasonings, or logics, if any, changed how you felt about your capability in this moment? ● What influencing factors, if any, were you considering or impacted by? ● As you describe the moment/occurrence, can you tell me what you were thinking and feeling? ● What factors went into your thinking? ● Who, if anyone else, would you describe as being involved? ○ How did that involvement impact your thinking, actions, emotions? ● How would you describe what changed? ○ How/why did that change happen? ○ What led up to it? ● How, if at all, would this event/action/thinking influence your thinking or actions moving forward?

	● If we were to remove [insert influence], how, if at all, would that have changed the outcome? ● How, if at all, did this change how you saw yourself? ● What support or barriers were present? ● How did this/these make you feel? ○ Why was that the case? ● Looking back, what is important about this? ● How did you know this/that? ● What learning, if any, occurred then/here?
Repeating Question (Q8A/B): As it related to your goal of remaining free from criminal offense: Q8A. What impact did this occurrence/action/ event have in the short-term, if any? Q8B. What impact did this occurrence/action/ event have in the long-term, if any?	● What makes you say that? ● How has this changed or remained true? ● How, if at all, does this happening impact your action and thinking now? ● What was the thinking that brought you to this conclusion at the time? ● How are the before and after different or the same in this regard? ● How does this occurrence/happening/situation repeat, if at all?
Repeating Question (Q9): In thinking about the action(s), thinking, and/or experience(s) you've described, how did this impact your trajectory moving forward?	● What/which influences informed this action? ● What were the considerations you made in acting, if any? ○ Walk me through your train of thought at the time. ● Describe your feelings and thoughts: ○ Before the action? ○ During the action? ○ After the action? ● How did this impact how you saw yourself? ● How did this impact how you saw the world? ● What related supports or hindrances were present?
Repeating Questions (Q10A/B): Q10A. What were the short-term results of this experience? Q10B. What were the long-term results of this experience?	● How, if at all, did this occurrence/event impact your staying free from criminality? ● How, if at all, did this occurrence impact future occurrences? ● Before we move on, what else should I know about this event and/or the circumstances surrounding it? ○ Why is it important to know that? ○ Tell me more.

	● What learning or lessons, if any, did you take from this event/occurrence/action?
Returning to Interview Protocol *(absent of a focus on the illustrative timeline tool and the critical incident protocol)*	
Q11. In thinking about the trajectory of what we've spoken about today, are there experiences connected to your desistance that you think are important to mention?	● Help me understand why this is important. ● Describe the context of this more. ● How did this make you feel? ● What was your thinking process? ● How did this shift how you saw: ○ Yourself? ○ Others? ○ Your environment or circumstance?
Q12. How is your perspective different now than it was before?	● Why do you think that is the case? ● What influenced the shift? ● How has this influenced: ○ Other views you hold? ○ Your actions? ○ Who you are now?
Q13. Are there events that we've yet to discuss that you feel were transformative?	● What makes you describe this event as transformative? ● What made it transformative? ● How did you feel at the time? ● What was your thought process? ○ Who or what influenced your thinking? ○ What support or hindrances were present?
Q14. What support and hindrances, if any, should we be sure to include that we haven't already?	● Tell me more about why that is important. ● What made this a support? ● What made this a challenge? ● Are there other supports or hindrances that we should include?

Q15. We've reached the end of my formal set of interview questions (A/B)… Q15A. What else should I know about the process of remaining free from criminality after release? Q15B. For any who are struggling to desist, what advice would you offer?	● Thank you. Help me understand why that should be included. ● Tell me more. ● Explain. Help me understand that. ● Describe what that means.
Q16. Are there other questions that you would recommend I ask?	● Thank you. Help me understand why that should be included. ● Tell me more. ● Explain. Help me understand that. ● Describe what that means.
● This concludes our interview. Thank you very much for your participation.	

Appendix E

Embedded Illustrative Timeline Tool

(the illustration below is representative of the timeline participants will saw on screen)

| **Y1** | **Y2** | **Y3** | **Y4** | **Y5** | **Y6** | **Y...**

(within the online application the timeline could extend for an infinite number of years)

Appendix F

Resources for Counseling and Mental Health Services

The Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES) offers free and sliding-scale counseling and mental health services to individuals previously incarcerated in New York and New Jersey. https://www.cases.org/

Walk-in Locations:

- Brooklyn
  - 151 Lawrence Street, 3rd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201
    Phone Number: (212) 553-6300
- Manhattan
  - 2090 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10027
    Phone Number: (212) 553-6606.

Community Healthcare Network offers free and sliding-scale counseling and mental health services to individuals previously incarcerated. https://www.chnnyc.org/
CHN Main Number: (866) 246-8259. This number can be used for 24/7 access to a CHN provider.

Locations

- Bronx
  - 4215 Third Avenue 2nd FL Bronx, NY 10457
  - 975 Westchester Avenue Bronx, NY 10459
- Brooklyn
  - 94-98 Manhattan Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11206
  - 1167 Nostrand Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11207
  - 999 Blake Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11225
  - 2581 Atlantic Avenue, 1st Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11207
- Manhattan
  - 81 W. 115th Street, New York, NY 10026
  - 150 Essex Street, New York, NY 10002
  - 511 W. 157th Street, New York, NY 10032
  - 350 Grand Street, Room 240, New York, NY 10002
  - 504 West 158th Street, New York, NY 10032
- Queens
  - 90-04 161st Street, 5th Floor, Jamaica, NY 11432
  - 36-11 21st Street, Long Island City, NY 11106
  - 97-04 Sutphin Boulevard, Jamaica, NY 11435

Appendix G

Initial Coding Scheme

Transformative Learning

TLM: Alignment with 10 Steps of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (2000)
- **TLM1:** Triggering Event/Disorienting Dilemma
- **TLM2:** Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame
- **TLM3:** Critical assessment of assumptions
- **TLM4:** Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
- **TLM5:** Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
- **TLM6:** Planning a course of action
- **TLM7:** Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
- **TLM8:** Provisionally trying new roles
- **TLM9:** Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
- **TLM10**: Reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective

TLC: Alignment with Cranton's Six Habits of Mind (2016)
- **TLCE:** Epistemic Habit
  - TLCEC: Change in Epistemic Habit
- **TLCSL:** Social-Linguistic Habit
  - TLCSLC: Change in Social-Linguistic Habit
- **TLCPSYCH:** Psychological Habit
  - TLCPSYCHC: Change in Psychological Habit
- **TLCME:** Moral-ethical Habit
  - TLCMEC: Change Moral-ethical Habit
- **TLCPHIL:** Philosophical Habit
  - TLCPHILC: Change in Philosophical Habit
- **TLCA:** Aesthetic Habit
  - TLCAC: Change in Aesthetic Habit

TLN: Alignment with Nerstrom's 4 phases of Transformative Learning (2014, 2017)
- **TLNE:** Experience
- **TLNA:** Assumptions
- **TLNCP:** Challenge Perspectives
- **TLNTL:** Transformative Learning

Efficacious Sources and Appraisals

ESAB: Alignment with Bandura's Efficacy Theory (1986, 1997)
- **ESAB-ME+**: Increased efficacy as result of Mastery Experience
- **ESAB-ME-:** Decreased efficacy as result of Mastery Experience
- **ESAB-VE+**: Increased efficacy as result of Vicarious Experience
- **ESAB-VE-:** Decreased efficacy as result of Vicarious Experience
- **ESAB-VP+:** Increased efficacy as result of Verbal Persuasion

ESAB-VP-: Decreased efficacy as result of Verbal Persuasion
ESAB-SR+: Increased efficacy as result of Somatic Response
ESAB-SR-: Decreased efficacy as result of Somatic Response
ESA-DS: Desistance support
ESA-DH: Desistance hindrance
ESA-AE: Anticipatory efficacy
ESA-EE: Event efficacy (during)
ESA-PE: Post-event efficacy (future)

Demographic Coding

DC-M: Male
DC-F: Female
DC-B: Black
DC-H/L: Hispanic/Latino
DC-W: White
DC-O: Other _____

Patterns in Descriptions of Interview Sample

PISD-TOESS: Transfer of efficacy, skill specific
PISD-TOEG: Transfer of efficacy, generalizable
PISD-ERS: Efficacy as a result of success
PISD-ICRS: Immediate change as result of success
PISD-PGS: Purposeful setting of a goal
PISD-CSSCI: Change/Shift in self-concept and identity
PISD-BTSUO: Benefiting from temporary success or unproductive experiences
PISD-PIO: Perceiving increased or alternative options
PISD-ROIO: Reflecting on increased options
PISD-GRA: Gradual or ongoing reconsideration of actions
PISD-IFPP: Intolerance for previous practices
PISD-IFPP: Intolerance for previous environments
PISD-WAL: Construct of winning and losing
PISD-DS: Description of struggle
PISD-DSUR: Description of survival / fight for essential resources
PISD-IOS: Identity as tied to opportunity or success
PISD-PF: Perspective of futility
PISD-PI: Perspective of inability
PISD-NP: New Perspectives
PISD-AGNI: Adoption or generating of new identity
PISD-ALSB: Adoption of limiting self-beliefs
PISD-RLSB: Reinforcement of limiting self-beliefs
PISD-CSC: Changes in self-concept
PISD-CRPN: Changes in or reprioritization of needs, values, perspectives
PISD-IDD: Increase in drug dependency
PISD-IDDSC: Increase in drug dependency in relation to self-concept
PISD-DDD: Decrease in drug dependency

PISD-DDDSC: Decrease in drug dependency in relation to self-concept
PISD-AT: Adoption of title
PISD-RI: Recognition of intersectionality
PISD-IN: Identity by negation
PISD-CIVO: Criminality to impact the views of others'
PISD-DUIVO: Drug usage to impact the view of others'
PISD-DUFR: Drug usage for relief
PISD-VP: Verbal persuasion
PISD-VPS: Verbal persuasion as support
PISD-VPH: Verbal persuasion as hindrance
PISD-VPNI: Verbal persuasion non-impact
PISD-VPE: Verbal persuasion or appraisal by expert
PISD-VPNE: Verbal persuasion or appraisal by non-expert
PISD-VPFCF: Verbal persuasion or appraisal by family or close friend
PISD-VPRC: Verbal persuasion recruitment toward criminality
PISD-PPPM: Positive perception of provider motivation
PISD-NPPM: Negative perception of provider motivation
PISD-FCH: External entity is familiar with participant's criminal history
PISD-UACH: External entity is aware of participant's criminal history
PISD-DAA: Difficulty accepting advice or guidance
PISD-EAA: Ease accepting advice or guidance
PISD-PPO: Perception of persuader as obligated
PISD-DVDC: Desistance vs disengagement or cessation
PISD-DSDC: Desistance separate from disengagement or cessation
PISD-TCD/TCA: Temporary disengagement or temporary cessation, criminal activity
PISD-MP: Mandatory programming
PISD-VP: Voluntary programming
PISD-LSE: Lack of space or energy
PISD-RFE: Revisiting formative experiences
PISD-CAE: Childhood or adolescent experience
PISD-NOD: Necessary for desistance
PISD-SR: Somatic response
PISD-REF: Reflection
PISD-REC: Reconsideration
PISD-CL: Critical learning
PISD-ESSR: Elimination or suppression of somatic responses
PISD-DSR: Disregarding of somatic response
PISD-RBA: Reactionary behaviors and actions
PISD-PCSR: Purposeful conditioning toward somatic response
PISD-SRT1: Somatic response triggered by recalled personal experience
PISD-SRT2: Somatic response triggered by verbal/vicarious experience
PISD-RCR: Reallocation of cognitive resources
PISD-NAOBO: Non-appraising observation by others
PISD-ICATCF: Increased cognizance and ability to consider future
PISD-ENC: Increased concern and consideration toward others'
PISD-AISP: Adoption of information searching practices

PISD-ISAS: Information searching for assessing situations
PISD-ISDC: Information searching in the interest of desired outcomes
PISD-ISAA: Information searching to assess ability

Code Clusters of initial Findings (level I)

Finding One: **PISD-ERS + PISD-TOEG → PISD-REF + PISD-CSC/PISD-AGNI**
Success in endeavors separate from the goal of avoiding criminality were generalizable and led to reflection and changes in self-concept.

Finding Two: **PISD-CSC → PISD-REF + PISD-CRPN**
Changes in self-concept led participants to reflect on resulting changes in their needs, values, and perspectives.

Finding Three: **PISD-VP + PISD-PPPM/PISD-NPPM → PISD-VPS/PISD-VPH**
While verbal persuasion had a significant impact on participants, participant perception of the providers' motivation was a determiner of whether verbal persuasion acted as a support or hindrance.

Finding Four: **PISD-DVDC / PISD-DSDC**
Participants viewed their desistance as having been separate from occurrences in which they may have appeared to be desistant under custody.

Finding Five: **PISD-NOD + PISD-RFE + PISD-REC**
Participants indicated that desistance required a reconsideration of early, repeated, and internalized experiences that they attributed as having led to the adoption of limiting self-beliefs and a view of incarceration as inevitable or deserved.

Finding Six: **PISD-NOD + PISD-REF + PISD-SR**
Reflection on somatic responses in preparation for moments of stress was integral to participants' efforts to remain desistant from criminality.

Finding Seven: **PISD-CL → PISD-NP/PISD-AGNI:**
Participants described themselves as having become a new or different individual due to critical learning that occurred during the desistance process.

Appendix H

Final Coding Scheme

F1: Resource insecurity and preoccupation with threat were common barriers to desistance

- F1.1: Descriptions of a necessary preoccupation with the gathering and protection of essential resources
- F1.2: Reduction of viable options for resource attainment that initiated their criminality as progressively worsening through each cycle of offense, arrest, incarceration and release
- F1.3: Reduction in viable options for resource attainment that initiated their criminality as progressively worsening as a result of stigma
- F1.4: Reduction in viable options for resource attainment that initiated their criminality as progressively worsening as a lowered self-efficacy
- F1.5: Reduction in viable options for resource attainment that initiated their criminality as progressively worsening as a result of increased competition for limited resources
- F1.6: Reduction in viable options for resource attainment that initiated their criminality as progressively worsening as a result of a reduction of opportunities at each stage from offense to release
- F1.7: Described needing to dedicate entirety of physical and cognitive energy to secure essential resources while needing to be vigilant of constant threats to amassed resources
- F1.8: Release conditions and competition generated for limited resources placed individuals further from being able to enter the reflective space required for desistance
- F1.9: Threat continually expanded as competition for, and the scarcity of, essential resources grew
- F1.10: Expansion of threat led to an increase in violence and the need and use of resources seen as offering protection or safety
- F1.11: Described release environments as having more threats than incarceration
- F1.12: Release presented the added challenge of navigating spaces in which he had previously engaged in criminality
- F1.13: Was issued a mandate a return to the community in which they offended
- F1.14: Described challenge of needing to navigate access to essential resources such as food and medical care.

F2: Success in endeavors separate from the goal of avoiding criminality were generalizable and led to reflection and changes in self-concept

- F2.1: Feelings of success and increased efficacy that came as a result of success in an endeavor separate from desistance was transferable
- F2.2: Described the initiating event of their desistance process as synonymous with a revelation or epiphany and serving as an indicator of ability that, in turn, caused them to see themselves differently
- F2.3: Described their desistance as having begun as a result of their perceiving themselves as being able to occupy roles and inhabit identities beyond what they previously thought possible
- F2.4: Required that new roles not be modified because of previous criminality
- F2.5: Required that metrics for appraisal not be modified because of previous criminality

F2.6: Required that appraisal of their probability for success was relative to the performance of others whom they saw as unbound by resource limitation
F2.7: Increased efficacy resulting from being assessed as equally, or more, capable than individuals that participants perceived and imagined as better prepared, based on assumed trajectories of experience toward observed outcomes
F2.8: Correlation between magnitude of perceived discrepancy between new information and established assumptions and ability to see a rejection of long-held beliefs as plausible
F2.9: Need for high degree of dissonance between new information and previously held self-concept
F2.10: Desistance-initiating success resulted in immediate change, adjustment in perspective, or alteration of identity
F2.11: Purposeful setting of a goal with the idea of using success as metriced evidence of likelihood or possibility of further or future success in another endeavor
F2.12: Curated their experiences of successes through the setting of goals and arrivals at markers AND still sought to appraise themselves against the likely performance of populations with environmental, social, and institutional advantages
F2.13: Clearly articulated shift in self-concept and identity
F2.14: Wholly adopted entirely new title-specific identities or personas as a result of desistance initiating success, rather than having initiated the gathering of a cumulative set of more minor revisions to self-concepts
F2.15: Assumed that their embodiment of specific identities meant an availability of options viewed as inherent to those identities
F2.16: Assumed that perceptions of options suggested an ability to succeed in exercising a chosen option despite unknown variables
F2.17: Sought to make revisions to embody their new identities and self-concepts more fully as they encountered incongruent perspectives from previous identities
F2.18: Replaced a previously established self-concept with concrete and commonly defined titles
F2.19: Came to definitions of self by negating those previously accepted self-concepts and holding to attributes synonymous with intelligence
F2.20: Differentiation between attributes and skills is evidenced in interview participants' descriptions of skill appraisals as having little to no generalizable impact on their self-efficacy
F2.21: Differentiation between attributes and skills is evidenced in interview participants' descriptions of skill appraisals as not being a cause for shifts in self-concept
F2.22: Explicit recognition of their intersectionality
F2.23: Clear indicators of considerations of how external entities classified them by participants who recognized their intersectionality
F2.24: Despite their new identities being by negation rather than presence, still engaged in alignment away from identities associated with violence and criminality
F2.25: Success and gained efficacy as generalizable
F2.26: Took on new and specific identities due to their having evidence of holding a required central attribute of the personas they chose to inhabit
F2.27: Members of affirmed identity group took on personas they had dreamt of or aspired to in the past

F2.28: Indicated that while they had aspired to specific identities and would have been just as motivated to inhabit any identity other than one associated with criminality
F2.29: Temporary success or unproductive opportunity as a presentation or addition of options beyond those previously perceived
F2.30: Effect of temporary success or unproductive opportunity continued beyond the length of the success or opportunity and transferred even when resulting in loss
F2.31: Success and efficacy gained from mastery experiences resulted in a perception of increased options that were seen as reason to engage in gradual and recurring considerations of actions
F2.32: Experienced a growing intolerance for repetition of previous practices due to increase in alternative options
F2.33: Included the construct of winning or losing in their articulations
F2.34: Despite efficacy attained through experiences not directly related to desistance having a degree of permanence and it did not result in the complete removal of feelings of skepticism as to whether they would succeed in their desistance
F2.35 Fear of situations where they would either not perceive, or be given, options that would allow their desistance to continue
F2.36: Success resulted in negation of harmful self-concept
F2.37: Success resulting in an expanded set of perceived options

F3: Changes in self-concept led participants to reflect on resulting changes in their needs, values, and/or perspectives

F3.1: Described pre-desistance needs values, and perspectives as being necessarily centered on issues of survival
F3.2: Described shift in self-concept(s) as a leading to their deviation from a previous form of living centered around a fight for essential resources
F3.3: Described a reconsideration of needs that resulted from changes in self-concept
F3.4: Described their adoption of their new self-concepts as not being limited or compartmentalized to specific environments or social settings
F3.5: Described the self-concepts taken from their initiating experiences as having permeated across the boundaries of their most compartmentalized social circles and settings
F3.6: Participants described their engagement in the revision of self-concepts and perspectives that they saw as putting them at risk while having no guarantee of success
F3.7: Described a cognizance of the manners in which new self-concepts required a reallocation of resources from survival toward further alignment toward chosen identity
F3.8: Described a cognitively oppressive state in which a survivalist preoccupation resulting from a lack of available resources left participants in a cyclic reaction to immediate threats and needs
F3.9: Described preoccupations related to resources, threat, and essential needs left participants unable to consider the past and future due to a lack of cognitive space or resource
F3.10: Described the shedding of their criminal personas and self-concepts as resulting from their perceiving themselves as being in the space of safety
F3.11: Described themselves as having felt it likely to meet their demise due to inattention to matters of survival

F3.12: Viewed reflection as a fruitless practice during periods in which they actively engaged in criminality
F3.13: Described themselves as having adopted their new identities with an assuredness that they would be able to acquire necessary traits, knowledge, and perspective through a continuous process of learning and reflection
F3.14: Replaced a previously established self-concept with concrete and commonly defined titles (e.g: Artist, Gardner, Playwright, etc.)
F3.15: Actively reflecting in order to further align toward their new self-concepts
F3.16: Desire to inhabit their newly chosen identities and self-concepts more fully led participants to make active reappraisal and reprioritization of their needs
F3.17: Decentered considerations of safety and essential need in order to focus on needs that they saw as related to the purposes of their new identities
F3.18: Described the emergence of purpose during their navigation and aligning toward new identities and self-concepts as a significant driver of their development agency
F3.19: No longer felt dependent on drugs as a result of new self-concept
F3.20: Described their liberation from drug dependence as being the result of their seeing the instrumentation and capability of their new identities and self-concepts as tools that they could wield to arrive at outcomes that were previously only available through them to drug use
F3.21: Drugs allowed for cognitive distance from the realities that demanded full use of his cognitive resources, but rendered participant unable to engage cognitive processes

F4: While verbal persuasion had a significant impact on participants, participant perception of the providers' motivation was a determiner of whether verbal persuasion acted as a support or hindrance

F4.1: Described instances in which verbal persuasion was impactful toward their desistance
F4.2: Verbal persuasion as a support
F4.3: Verbal persuasion as hindrance
F4.4: Verbal persuasion that influenced either participants' desire to, or belief that they could, desist from criminality were not directly related to the topic of desistance from criminality
F4.5: Verbal persuasion supporting desistance came from sources that participants' considered to be authorities and that were unaware of participants' criminal history
F4.6: Difficulty accepting well-intentioned advice from those familiar with their criminal history
F4.7: Well-intentioned verbal persuasion as hindrance toward their desistance, articulated by persuader who had knowledge of their criminal history
F4.8: Well-intentioned verbal persuasion as hindrance toward their desistance, articulated by persuader who was not seen by participants as an authority on the subject on which they were commenting
F4.9: Primary challenge of having an evaluator who was knowledgeable of their criminal history described as the activation of biases that would impact how the evaluator viewed, appraised, and interacted with them
F4.10: Hinderance rooted in frustration at non-expert facilitating mandated trainings

F4.11: Hinderance rooted in friend or family member taking multiple opportunities to offer unsolicited advice
F4.12: Inability to trust the judgment or evaluations given by others as a result of perception speaker's obligation, personal relationship
F4.13: Inability to trust the judgment or evaluations given by others as a result of perception of speaker's obligation, duties of their profession
F4.14: Mandatory program cited as common setting for well-intentioned verbal persuasion as hindrance
F4.15: Non-Mandatory programming in which persuaders chose to interact with the participant by focusing on their past cited as common setting for well-intentioned verbal persuasion as hindrance
F4.16: Impacted by verbal persuasion intended toward criminal activity (post desistance process)
F4.17: Unaffected by the attempts of verbal persuasion toward criminality (post-desistance) as result of no longer seeing persuaders as having expertise or insight
F4.18: No longer exhibited a vulnerability toward appeals made to capitalize on their feeling of shame, fear, or guilt that persuaders had previously used to motivate them toward criminal action as a result of their dismissal of the persuaders as relevant

F5: Each of the participants viewed their desistance as separate from occurrences in which they may have appeared to be desistant under custody
F5.1: Described difference between discontinuance of, or temporary cessation from, criminality as separate from desistance
F5.2: Temporarily ceased criminal activity to avoid being seen as challenging the authority or profitability of others involved in criminal practices (Dayroom), in incarceration
F5.3: Temporarily discontinued criminal behavior to give the appearance of having been rehabilitated and performed (presented) specific behaviors (while incarcerated) to gain the favor of individuals in authority
F5.4: Stated that instances of temporary cessation or discontinuance of criminal behavior were not connected to desistance
F5.5: Inability to engage in thinking and reflection that results in desistance due to lack of mental space within incarcerated settings
F5.6: Inability to engage in thinking and reflection that results in desistance due to lack of mental space exacerbated by programs made mandatory as a stipulation of release
F5.7: A need to address immediate and ongoing threats that extended into release, prevented access to cognitive space and mental resources needed to engage in the reflective learning toward desistance
F5.8: Description of policy as preventing individuals from engaging in desistance while incentivizing a presentation of self as reformed

F6: Desistance required a reconsideration of early, repeated, and internalized experiences that led to the adoption of limiting self-beliefs and a view of incarceration as inevitable or deserved.
F6.1: Described having to contend with feelings of powerlessness that they attributed as having begun as consequences of early, repeated, and internalized experiences that they had in youth and adolescence

F6.2: Conscious addressing of emotion and perspectives from defining childhood and adolescent experiences, as necessary to combat attempts by persuasion toward reentry into criminal activity
F6.3: Negative formative experience with an authority in a school setting
F6.4: Negative formative experience with law enforcement
F6.5: Families provided participants with counter-narratives, this did little to mitigate school personnel and officers recognized institutional authority
F6.6: Recognized school and law enforcement representatives as having absolute authority by virtue of their positions from a young age
F6.7: Recognized school and law enforcement representatives as being trustworthy and having absolute authority as result of societal narratives
F6.8: Publicly criminalized through unfounded arrests that schools initiated
F6.9: Felt that at least one of their arrests occurred as retaliation for attempting to assert their right to an equitable education
F6.10: Recognized authority figures as being enforcers of societal limitations
F6.11: Drawing of a connection between discriminatory treatment, inequity of resource and access, and their burgeoning cognizance of systemic prejudice resulted in seeing subjection as ineluctable
F6.12: Harm made exponential by having negative identities communicated to them in front of their peers
F6.13: Harm made exponential by cognizance that their desired objectives only seemed within the reach of their non-discriminated peers'
F6.14: Environmental and social reinforcement of negative or limiting self-concept generated in early interactions and experiences
F6.15: Saw their individual experiences with authorities as having been defining moments in their conceptual trajectory toward violence, criminality, and the upholding of limiting self-concepts
F6.16: Conditions and experiences witnessed as happening to similarly positioned peers furthered limiting self-concepts
F6.17: Described the verbal persuasion and vicarious influence of aspirational models, who were able to survive despite their being limited by the same systemic boundaries, as informing their approach to filling unmet essential needs
F6.18: Unable to cite examples of significant influences or events that provided perspectives to challenge the immutability of their conditions or the limited number of roles and identities they saw as being available to them
F6.19: Unable to recall instances in their youth in which they felt served or cared for by institutions
F6.20: Described current cognizance of the pervasiveness of oppression in response to question about positive influences/events that challenged immutability of limiting conditions or recollection of being served well served by institutions during youth
F6.22: Offered what they currently hold as evidence that their current distrust of institutions is well warranted in response to question about positive influences/events that challenged immutability of limiting conditions or recollection of being served well served by institutions during youth

F6.23: Perceptions of inadequacy, inefficacy, and powerlessness as resulting from negative and limiting formative experiences that required conscious addressing to remain desistant
F6.24: Re-engagement of formative experiences, serving as a means of identifying the origins of long held beliefs and perspectives
F6.25: Returning to memories of their experience in order to reappraise events
F6.26: Perceived formative experiences as being causality for their perspectives and propensity toward criminal action and violence
F6.27: Consciously avoided engaging with memories of their formative experiences prior to start of desistance process
F6.28: Came to view phase two as inefficient
F6.29: Sought a means of editing perspectives more effectively than what occurred through the phase 2 approach
F6.30: Participants identified patterns of origin in newly incongruent behaviors and perspectives that led their seeing connection between their proclivities toward criminality and violence and narratives of subjugation and limiting beliefs they had accepted during their youth and adolescence
F6.31: Generative experiences resulted in the formation of underlying assumptions that they used to interpret and make sense of the world
F6.32: Described how implicit and explicit curricula worked to reify harmful narratives that they may have otherwise addressed sooner
F6.33: Negative experiences during youth and adolescence experiences resulted in their having limited self-concepts
F6.34: Reconsideration of formative memories led to awareness of the systemic operation of oppression
F6.35: Awareness of systemic oppression led to participants understanding how the authorities they encountered in their youth operated as actors or agents of institutions that exist as branches of systemic and institutional oppression
F6.36: Awareness of the systemic operation of oppression led to participants combating the conditions of their experience more effectively
F6.37: Described the imposition of influences that led to their limiting self-concepts as occurring in youth, before they had had an opportunity to develop self-efficacy
F6.38: Youth Observations of the failure of aspirational models' and peers to overcome shared challenges and limitations reified beliefs in the futility of subversive action
F6.39: Reconsideration of formative memories led to a feeling of emancipation from internalized constraints
F6.40: Began to see conditions created by oppressive systems as alterable due to their requiring willing subjugation of a participant
F6.41: Reevaluation of formative experiences, and considerations of impact, led to subsequent considerations of how those experiences informed the thinking of others around them
F6.42: Cognizance of the impact that their formative experience may have had on white peers led to revision of beliefs about the immutability of social and institutional oppression

F6.43: Recognition of the mechanisms by which prejudice and oppression operate as learned behaviors led to a reduction in hostility toward those they saw as taking part in or benefitting from their oppression
F6.44: Recognition of the mechanisms by which prejudice and oppression operate as learned behaviors led to a reduction in targeted violence
F6.45: Recognition of a parallel curriculum that informed those who participate as actors in participants' oppression led to participants seeing some of the actors as victims
F6.46: Understanding that oppression and prejudices result from learned and acculturated behaviors, and an understanding that their subjugation to oppressive systems is socially constructed, resulted in oppressive systems appearing less formidable
F6.47: Described criminal action as an attempt to meet the need for essential resources
F6.48: Described criminal violence as an attempt to combat oppressive systems by attacking its representatives and actors
F6.49: Described criminal violence as an attempt at subverting the feeling of powerlessness by having physical and psychological power over another individual
F6.50: Described criminal violence as an attempt to meet the need for essential resources
F6.51: Described criminal violence as a means of securing safety or protection
F6.52: Engagement in the mining of formative experiences resulted in participants seeing physical violence as an ineffective and unacceptable means of combating systems, subverting powerlessness, or meeting basic needs
F6.53: Revision of assumptions about the effectiveness and necessity of criminal violence provided as evidence of the need and benefit of re-engaging their formative experiences
F6.54: Re-engagement of formative experiences led to perception of self as a victim of violence and recalibration toward combating systems rather than seeking retribution or gain through the targeting of individuals
F6.55: Re-engagement of formative experiences led to perception of self as a victim of violence and recalibration toward opting out of systems rather than seeking retribution or gain through the targeting of individuals
F6.56: Reporting that recruiters often use an individual’s unresolved feelings of pain and victimization as a means of recruiting them toward criminality
F6.57: Reporting that would-be persuaders often sought to present individual targets as the reason for participants’ suffering and an attack on these individuals as being a solution to long-standing conditions of inequity and abuse
F6.58: Described recalibrations as thwarting attempts to persuade them back toward criminality
F6.59: Described engagement in the process of consciously addressing the emotion and perspectives from defining childhood and adolescent experiences, as a necessary step toward combating attempts by others to persuade them reentry into criminal activity
F6.60: Described reflective reengagement of formative experiences as having led to a more profound understanding of underlying assumptions and how these assumptions inform their habitual actions and perspectives
F6.61: Described reflective reengagement of formative experiences as having altered how their formative experiences impact them
F6.62: Identification of feelings of shame, fear, or anger they had carried as a result of experiences in which they were framed as relationally limited, inadequate, or powerless, during youth or adolescence

F6.63: Participants described engagement of formative experiences as having led to their awareness of the need to engage in reflection about their somatic responses

F7: Formative youth and adolescent experiences played a significant role in participants' arrival at adult criminality

F7.1: Described their limiting and harmful self-concepts as having been generated during adulthood

F7.2: Led to believe they had natural talents and abilities that would be profitable and afford a wide array of choices and options that would serve them through adulthood, during youth and adolescence

F7.3: Belief in entitlement to more resources or opportunity than others based on race/ethnicity or citizenship

F7.4: Belief in entitlement to more resources or opportunities than others based on their race, ethnicity, or citizenship tied to religious concepts

F7.5: Description of being explicitly taught that they had racial superiority, during youth and adolescence

F7.6: Youth observation of the success of aspirational models and those whom they viewed as their peer group as being evidence of their impending success

F7.7: Acculturated into a belief in the guaranteed success and racial superiority, participants arrived at adulthood with high-levels of efficacy as a result of direct and vicarious success and an expectation that they would be entitled to more than their non-white peers

F7.8: Participants encountered information during the early portions of their adulthood that led to a lowering of efficacy and a questioning of self-concepts

F7.9: Disorientation as the result of seeing individuals whom they viewed as inferior to themselves progress beyond them in education

F7.10: Disorientation as the result of seeing individuals whom they viewed as inferior to themselves progress beyond them in financial achievement

F7.11: Criminal intention and violence that differentiated youthful missteps and engagement in criminality came as a result of disorientation and loss of efficacy experienced in the transition to adulthood

F7.12: Experienced a cascading adoption of limiting self-beliefs that caused them to see a reduced number of options as viable and success at endeavors outside of criminality as unlikely

F7.13: Feelings of shame, fear, and anger as a result of self-perceived limitations, during adulthood

F8: Described reflection on somatic responses in preparation for moments of stress as integral to remaining desistant from criminality

F8.1: Engaged in reflection to suppress or eliminate somatic responses to stress

F8.3: Engaged in reflection to gain the ability to disregard somatic responses in cases where cognizance of their somatic responses would have led to reactionary behaviors and actions

F8.4: Felt that their somatic responses were the result of efforts by gangs to weaponize and condition responses of violence to specific stimuli

F8.5: Somatic responses as having prevented them from accessing their ability to reason

F8.6: Felt as if they acted against their will when experiencing somatic responses to stress
F8.7: Somatic response triggered by presence of law enforcement as a result previous direct and/or personally witnessed interactions with law enforcement
F8.8: Somatic response triggered by reminder of experiences in which they were harmed or in the presence of other individuals while they were harmed, non law-enforcement
F8.9: Somatic response triggered by likeness of circumstance to circumstances, that participants had heard about through word of mouth, in which harm that had come to family member(s) during a time in which participants were youths or not yet born
F8.10: Somatic response triggered by the presence an identifiable group (non-racial/non-ethnic/non-law enforcement) with perceived likeness to alleged assailants presented as having harmed or murdered individuals that participants saw as being similar to themselves
F8.11: Somatic response triggered by the presence of a group of a particular race or ethnicity as group (but not an individual) with perceived likeness to assailants alleged to have harmed individuals that participants saw as being similar to themselves
F8.12: Somatic response triggered by the presence of an individual of specific race or ethnicity with perceived likeness to assailants presented as having harmed or killed individuals that participants saw as similar to themselves
F8.13: Somatic response triggered by presence of law enforcement as a result what was presentations of information (through word of mouth or media), in which individuals that participants viewed as similar to themselves were killed by police
F8.14: Commonly experienced somatic responses at seeing similarity in an individual's race or ethnicity to assailants in stories they'd heard or images they'd seen in movies or television
F8.15: Described somatic triggers as resulting in their physical bodies preparing to engage in violence
F8.16: Despite engagement in other steps, described themselves as still having needed to engage in intentional suppression or disregarding of bodily responses to engage in thinking and reasoning during moments of high stress
F8.17: Described themselves as having engaged in imagined experiences in which they found themselves in situations of being triggered by the aforementioned stressors as a means of preparing too suppress or disregarded the somatic responses
F8.19: Rehearsed or coached themselves to engage in box breathing as means of suppressing or disregarding physiological responses
F8.20: Rehearsed or coached themselves to engage in purposeful hesitation or stillness as means of suppressing or disregarding physiological responses
F8.21: Rehearsed or coached themselves to engage in positive self-talk as means of suppressing or disregarding physiological responses
F8.22: Planned for the recollection of action plans during their imagined experiences in hopes of drawing upon the same strategies during moments of threat or high stress
F8.23: Ability to reallocate cognitive resources as requiring preemptive engagement in the cognitive experiencing or imagining of scenarios likely to trigger somatic responses
F8.24: Used imagined scenarios as being a means of gaining comfort in discomfort, external stimuli

F8.25: Used imagined scenarios as being a means of creating scenarios they could draw on as a means of accounting for unencountered variables that emerged as possibilities, external stimuli

F8.26: Increased exposure to groups or individuals whom perceived as threat did not impact ability to better manage somatic responses or result in groups or individuals being seen as less of a threat

F8.27: Participants credited their management of somatic responses as being connected to the efficacy gained through experiences of non-desistance related success

F9: View of self as having became a new or different individual as a result of critical learning throughout the desistance process

F9.1: Observations and expressions offered by others, proof of being new or different (28 of 30)

F9.2: Increased cognizance of, and ability to consider, future consequences and benefits, proof of being new or different

F9.3: Increase in concern and consideration toward others' feelings and well-being, proof of being new or different

F9.4: A shift or change in perceived needs, proof of being new or different

F9.5: Adoption of information searching practices, proof of being new or different

F9.6: Importance of a praxis based approach, learning to desist

F9.7: Model of desistance as having been of enduring or notable importance

F9.8: Personal consequences of specific courses of action or responses, described as a focus of reflection

F9.9: Opportunity costs of specific courses of action or responses, described as a focus of reflection

F9.10: Benefits of specific courses of actions or responses, described as a focus of reflection

F9.11: Impact of specific courses of action or responses on others, described as a focus of reflection

F9.12: Unknown factors and ways to gather relevant information, described as a focus of reflection

F9.13: Perceived reflection as a natural occurrence

F9.14: Perceived harm or hurt act as motivator of, or catalyst toward, reflection

F9.15: Perceived love of themselves or someone else as catalyst toward reflection, without the compliment or impact of harm or hurt

Appendix I

Disaggregate of Interview Participants' Survey Responses

IP#	Name	Age	R/E	S/G	EL	RP	PL	IL	AI	<18	<10	10–12	13–17	18–22	23–27	27–30	>30	LI	LC
1	Alex	25	B	M/M	HS	C	E	3	19	Y	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	6	19
2	Brian	26	B	M/M	< HS	M	E	2	19	Y	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	6	20
3	Caleb	26	H/L	M/M	< HS	NR	E	1	20	N	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	7	19
4	Cassius	26	B	M/M	HS	N/A	E	2	19	Y	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	5	21
5	Caesar	27	B	M/NB	< HS	NR	E	4	21	Y	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	6	21
6	Christopher	28	H/L	M/M	< HS	N/A	E	3	22	Y	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	8	20
7	Daniel	28	H/L	M/M	HS	NR	E	5	23	Y	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	5	23
8	David	28	B	M/M	M	NR	E	4	22	N	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	23
9	Elijah	28	W	M/M	HS	M	E	<1	23	Y	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	23
10	Frederick	29	H/L	M/M	M	N/A	S	1	20	N	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	10	19
11	Gilbert	32	O-I	M/NB	M	NR	E	1	22	Y	1	0	6	3	0	0	0	11	21
12	Henry	33	H/L	M/M	D	NR	E	6	19	Y	0	0	3	5	0	0	0	5	28
13	Israel	33	B	M/M	HS	C	E	6	22	N	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	9	24
14	James	33	B	M/M	< HS	NR	E	3	25	N	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	5	28
15	Louis	33	B	M/M	M	NR	E	2	23	Y	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	7	26
16	Mark	33	B	M/M	HS	NR	E	7	20	Y	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	5	28
17	Michael	36	H/L	M/M	B	NR	S	4	28	Y	0	0	2	2	3	0	0	10	26
18	Nathaniel	36	B	M/M	HS	NR	E	2	23	Y	2	0	4	1	2	0	0	7	29
19	Noah	37	W	M/M	HS	NR	E	<1	30	Y	0	0	2	4	3	0	0	6	31
20	Oscar	38	H/L	M/M	< HS	NR	E	8	25	Y	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	6	32
21	Phillip	38	B	M/M	B	NR	E	9	23	N	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	10	28
22	Quincy	39	H/L	M/M	D	NR	E	2	30	N	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	6	33
23	Roland	39	H/L	M/M	M	C	E	13	22	N	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	19	20
24	Samuel	39	W	M/M	HS	C	E	<1	33	Y	0	0	0	6	6	3	0	7	32
25	Solomon	40	B	M/M	< HS	C	E	10	23	N	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	17	23
26	Theodore	40	B	M/M	D	C	E	4	30	Y	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	13	27
27	Victor	40	H/L	M/M	< HS	M	S	12	27	N	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	11	29
28	Waldo	45	B	M/M	D	C	E	14	24	Y	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	5	40
29	Xavier	45	W	M/M	< HS	M	E	<1	36	Y	0	0	0	4	6	3	3	5	40
30	Yusuf	47	W	M/M	B	NR	E	1	39	N	0	0	0	1	1	2	8	6	41

Note. IP# = Interview Participant Number; Name = Pseudonym Name; Age = Current Age; R/E = Race/Ethnicity; S/G = Sex/Gender; EL = Education Level; RP= Religious Preference; PL = Preferred Language; IL = recent Incarceration Length; AI = Age at start of recent Incarceration; <18 = Incarcerated before 18 years old; < 10 = Number of arrests ages 5–9; 10–12 = Number of arrests ages 10–12; 13–17 = Number of arrests ages 13–17; 18–22 = Number of arrests ages 18–22; 23–27 = Number of arrests ages 23–27; 27–30 = Number of arrests ages 27–30; > 30 = Number of arrests ages 31–40; LI = years since Last Involvement. LC = Age of Last Criminality

Appendix J

Coded Transcript Excerpt

Participant 39 (Xavier): I'd always felt like if the circumstances went south that I would go back to dealing, so while I hadn't been involved in a crime, I didn't think I was going to have any other choice. I believed that eventually, everything gold turns to shit.

I was working as a doorman and those jobs don't usually go to former convicts. All it takes is one bullshit complaint, it could be that they don't like your haircut and you're out. Or it could be somebody googled you and found out you did a bid. But I had gotten this job on the low, so there was no background check.

Where the change happened was when I'd saved up enough to buy an apartment. It boosted my confidence. I felt like a winner because I was able to save up and buy a house. And to be real, something weird happened. Even when I lost the job because of a background check and the lost apartment, I knew that I could do it again and the options never went back to what they were. Once a man realizes he's more than what people told him his whole life—okay, his options never go back to the limit they were at.

SE (interviewer): As we look at your timeline, where would that be represented?

Participant 39 (Xavier): That's the first pyramid, the top of the mountain right there. It's the first time I felt up. Like something good might be able to happen. I knew that there would be other stuff on the road, big challenges but it didn't feel like I was the same version of myself, so it felt like those challenges might not stop me. I already proved I could do more than they told me I could.

SE (interviewer): Can you tell me more about what you mean by that?

Participant 39 (Xavier): Everyone has a set of options that you get when you're a kid. If your rich, you got lots of options. If your poor, there are less roads you could take. The roads that I was given as a kid didn't show the options that I got once I had a job. Even for a poor kid, school let me know I was dumb. So… it's hard to explain, but your options define you and who you are defines your options. If you grow up rich with a horse, you can become someone who raises horses. Horse-raiser was never going to be identity because raising horses was never an financial option.

Appendix Ka

Chart for Finding 1 (1 of 2)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Resource insecurity and preoccupation with threat were common barriers to desistance (30 of 30)	Descriptions of a necessary preoccupation with the gathering and protection of essential resources (30 of 30)	Reduction of viable options for resource attainment that initiated their criminality as progressively worsening through each cycle of offense, arrest, incarceration and release (30 of 30)	Reduction in viable options for resource attainment that initiated their criminality as progressively worsening as a result of stigma (25 of 30)	Reduction in viable options for resource attainment that initiated their criminality as progressively worsening as a lowered self-efficacy (30 of 30)	Reduction in viable options for resource attainment, initiated criminality and progressively worsening as result of increased competition for limited resources (30 of 30)	Reduction in viable options for resource attainment, initiated criminality and progressively worsening as result of opportunity reduction at each stage from offense to release (30 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X		X	X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X		X	X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X		X	X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X		X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X	X		X	X	X

Appendix Kb

Chart for Finding 1 (2 of 2)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Described needing to dedicate entirety of physical and cognitive energy to secure essential resources while needing to be vigilant of constant threats to amassed resources (30 of 30)	Release conditions and competition generated for limited resources placed individuals further from being able to enter the reflective space required for desistance (30 of 30)	Threat continually expanded as competition for, and the scarcity of, essential resources grew (30 of 30)	Expansion of threat led to an increase in violence and the need and use of resources seen as offering protection or safety (30 of 30)	Described release environments as having more threats than incarceration (30 of 30)	Release presented the added challenge of navigating spaces in which he had previously engaged in criminality (25 of 30)	Was issued a mandate a return to the community in which they offended (25 of 30)	Described challenge of needing to navigate access to essential resources such as food and medical care (30 of 30).
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X	X	X			X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X	X			X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X	X	X			X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X	X	X			X
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X	X	X	X			X

Appendix La

Chart for Finding 2 (1 of 5)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Success in endeavors separate from the goal of avoiding criminality were generalizable and led to reflection and changes in self-concept (30 of 30)	Feelings of success and increased efficacy that came as a result of success in an endeavor separate from desistance was transferable (30 of 30)	Described the initiating event of their desistance process as synonymous with a revelation or epiphany and serving as an indicator of ability that, in turn, caused them to see themselves differently (30 of 30)	Described their desistance as having begun as a result of their perceiving themselves as being able to occupy roles and inhabit identities beyond what they previously thought possible (30 of 30)	Required that new roles not be modified because of previous criminality (29 of 30)	Required that metrics for appraisal not be modified because of previous criminality (29 of 30)	Required that appraisal of their probability for success was relative to the performance of others whom they saw as unbound by resource limitation (29 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	X		
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X	X	X		X	X

Appendix Lb

Chart for Finding 2 (2 of 5)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Increased efficacy resulting from being assessed as equally, or more, capable than individuals that participants perceived and imagined as better prepared, based on assumed trajectories of experience toward observed outcomes (30 of 30)	Correlation between magnitude of perceived discrepancy between new information and established assumptions and ability to see a rejection of long-held beliefs as plausible (26 of 30)	Need for high degree of dissonance between new information and previously held self-concept (22 of 30)	Desistance-initiating success resulted in immediate change, adjustment in perspective, or alternation of identity (30 of 30)	Purposeful setting of a goal with the idea of using success as metriced evidence of likelihood or possibility of further or future success in another endeavor (15 of 30)	Curated their experiences of successes through the setting of goals and arrivals at markers AND still sought to appraise themselves against the likely performance of populations with environmental, social, and institutional advantages (12 of 30).	Clearly articulated shift in self-concepts and identity (30 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X			X	X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X			X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X			X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X		X			X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X			X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X			X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X	X			X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X		X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X			X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X			X
P14	James	33	B	X			X	X		X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X		X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X			X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X			X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X			X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X			X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X			X	X	X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X	X	X			X
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X			X
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X			X			X

Appendix Lc

Chart for Finding 2 (3 of 5)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Wholly adopted entirely new title-specific identities or personas as a result of desistance initiating success, rather than having initiated the gathering of a cumulative set of more minor revisions to self-concepts (19 of 30)	Assumed that their embodiment of specific identities meant an availability of options viewed as inherent to those identities (19 of 30)	Assumed that perceptions of options suggested an ability to succeed in exercising a chosen option despite unknown variables (19 of 30)	Sought to make revisions to embody their new identities and self-concepts more fully as they encountered incongruent perspectives from previous identities (30 of 30)	Replaced a previously established self-concept with concrete and commonly defined titles (19 of 30)	Came to definitions of self by negating those previously accepted self-concepts and holding to attributes synonymous intelligence (11 of 30)	Differentiation between attributes and skills is evidenced in interview participants' descriptions of skill appraisals as having little to no generalizable impact on their self-efficacy (30 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L				X		X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B				X		X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X	X	X		X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L				X		X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X		X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B				X		X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X	X		X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L				X		X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L				X		X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X	X	X		X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P26	Theodore	40	B				X		X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L				X		X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B				X		X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W				X		X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W				X		X	X

Appendix Ld

Chart for Finding 2 (4 of 5)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Differentiation between attributes and skills is evidenced in interview participants' descriptions of skill appraisals as not being a cause for shifts in self-concept (30 of 30).	Explicit recognition of their intersectionality (10 of 30)	Clear indicators of considerations of how external entities classified them by participants who recognized their intersectionality (10 of 30).	Despite their new identities being by negation rather than presence, still engaged in alignment away from identities associated with violence and criminality (11 of 30)	Success and gained efficacy as generalizable (30 of 30)	Took on new and specific identities due to their having evidence of holding a required central attribute of the personas they chose to inhabit (19 of 30)	Members of affirmed identity group took on personas they had dreamt of or aspired to in the past (8 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X				X	X	
P2	Brian	26	B	X				X	X	
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X			X	X		
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X		
P5	Caesar	27	B	X				X	X	
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X				X	X	
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X				X	X	
P8	David	28	B	X				X	X	
P9	Elijah	28	W	X				X	X	
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X				X	X	
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X				X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X				X	X	
P14	James	33	B	X				X	X	
P15	Louis	33	B	X				X	X	
P16	Mark	33	B	X				X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X				X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X		
P19	Noah	37	W	X				X	X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X				X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X				X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		
P24	Samuel	39	W	X				X	X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X				X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X		
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X		
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X	X	X		
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X	X	X	X		

Appendix Le

Chart for Finding 2 (5 of 5)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Indicated that while they had aspired to specific identities and would have been just as motivated to inhabit any identity other than one associated with criminality (7 of 30)	Temporary success or unproductive opportunity as a presentation or addition of options beyond those previously perceived (14 of 30)	Effect of temporary success or unproductive opportunity continued beyond the length of the success or opportunity and transferred even when resulting in loss (14 of 30)	Success and efficacy gained from mastery experiences resulted in a perception of increased options that were seen as reason to engage in gradual and recurring considerations of actions (28 of 30)	Experienced a growing intolerance for repetition of previous practices due to increase in alternative options (24 of 30)	Included the construct of winning or losing in their articulations (14 of 30)	Despite efficacy attained through experiences not directly related to desistance having a degree of permanence and it did not result in the complete removal of feelings of skepticism as to whether they would succeed in their desistance (30 of 30)	Fear of situations where they would either not perceive, or be given, options that would allow their desistance to continue (30 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B		X	X	X		X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L				X	X		X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B				X	X		X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B				X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L				X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L				X	X		X	X
P8	David	28	B				X	X		X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W			X				X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L				X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I		X	X	X	X		X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X			X			X	X
P13	Israel	33	B				X	X		X	X
P14	James	33	B		X	X	X			X	X
P15	Louis	33	B		X	X	X	X		X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B				X	X		X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X			X			X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L		X	X	X	X		X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L				X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B		X	X	X	X		X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L				X	X	X	X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B				X	X		X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W							X	X

Appendix Ma

Chart for Finding 3 (1 of 3)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Changes in self-concept led participants to reflect on resulting changes in their needs, values, and/or perspectives (30 of 30)	Described pre-desistance needs values, and perspectives as being necessarily centered on issues of survival (30 of 30)	Described shift in self-concept(s) as a leading to their deviation from a previous form of living centered around a fight for essential resources (30 of 30)	Described a reconsideration of needs that resulted from changes in self-concept (28 of 30)	Described their adoption of their new self-concepts as not being limited or compartmentalized to specific environments or social settings (26 of 30)	Described the self-concepts taken from their initiating experiences as having permeated across the boundaries of their most compartmentalized social circles and settings (21 of 30).	Participants described their engagement in the revision of self-concepts and perspectives that they saw as putting them at risk while having no guarantee of success (26 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X			X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X				
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X			
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X	X	X		X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X	X	X		
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X	X				

Appendix Mb

Chart for Finding 3 (2 of 3)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Described a cognizance of the manners in which new self-concepts required a reallocation of resources from survival toward further alignment toward chosen identity (15 of 30)	Described a cognitively oppressive state in which a survivalist preoccupation resulting from a lack of available resources left participants in a cyclic reaction to immediate threats and needs (30 of 30)	Described preoccupations related to resources, threat, and essential needs left participants unable to consider the past and future due to a lack of cognitive space or resource (26 of 30).	Described the shedding of their criminal personas and self-concepts as resulting from their perceiving themselves as being in the space of safety (0 of 30)	Described themselves as having felt it likely to meet their demise due to inattention to matters of survival (26 of 30).	Viewed reflection as a fruitless practice during periods in which they actively engaged in criminality (30 of 30)	Described themselves as having adopted their new identities with an assuredness that they would be able to acquire necessary traits, knowledge, and perspective through a continuous process of learning and reflection (19 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B		X	X		X		X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X		X		X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L		X	X		X		
P4	Cassius	26	B		X	X		X		
P5	Caesar	27	B		X	X		X		X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X		X		X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X		X		X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X		X		X
P9	Elijah	28	W		X					X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X		X		
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I		X	X		X		X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X		X		X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X		X		X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X		X		X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X		X		X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X		X		X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X		X		X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X		X		
P19	Noah	37	W		X					X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L		X	X		X		X
P21	Phillip	38	B		X	X		X		X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X		X		
P23	Roland	39	H/L		X	X		X		
P24	Samuel	39	W		X	X		X		X
P25	Solomon	40	B		X	X		X		X
P26	Theodore	40	B		X	X		X		
P27	Victor	40	H/L		X	X		X		
P28	Waldo	45	B		X	X		X		
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X					
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X					

Appendix Mc

Chart for Finding 3 (3 of 3)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Replaced a previously established self-concept with concrete and commonly defined titles (e.g: Artist, Gardner, Playwright, etc.) (19 of 30)	Actively reflecting in order to further align toward their new self-concepts consistently emerged across participant interviews (30 of 30)	Desire to inhabit their newly chosen identities and self-concepts more fully led participants to make active reappraisal and reprioritization of their needs (28 of 30)	Decentered considerations of safety and essential need in order to focus on needs that they saw as related to the purposes of their new identities (26 of 30)	Described the emergence of purpose during their navigation and aligning toward new identities and self-concepts as a significant driver of their development agency (30 of 30)	No longer felt dependent on drugs as a result of new self-concept (20 of 30)	Described their liberation from drug dependence as being the result of their seeing the instrumentation and capability of their new identities and self-concepts as tools that they could wield to arrive at outcomes that were previously only available through them to drug use (20 of 30)	Drugs allowed for cognitive distance from the realities that demanded full use of his cognitive resources, but rendered participant unable to engage cognitive processes (20 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	X			
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L		X	X	X	X			
P4	Cassius	26	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X			
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X			X			
P10	Frederick	29	H/L		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X			
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B		X	X	X	X			
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X		X			
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L		X	X	X	X			
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L		X	X	X	X			
P28	Waldo	45	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W		X	X		X	X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W		X			X			

Appendix Na

Chart for Finding 4 (1 of 3)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	While verbal persuasion had a significant impact on participants, participant perception of the providers' motivation was a determiner of whether verbal persuasion acted as a support or hindrance (30 of 30)	Described instances in which verbal persuasion was impactful toward their desistance (30 of 30)	Verbal persuasion as a support (30 of 30)	Verbal persuasion as hindrance (24 of 30)	Verbal persuasion that influenced either participants' desire to, or belief that they could, desist from criminality were not directly related to the topic of desistance from criminality (30 of 30)	Verbal persuasion supporting desistance came from sources that participants' considered to be authorities and that were unaware of participants' criminal history (30 of 30).	Difficulty accepting well-intentioned advice from those familiar with their criminal history (30 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X		X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X		X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X	X		X	X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X		X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X		X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X	X		X	X	X

Appendix Nb

Chart for Finding 4 (2 of 3)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Well-intentioned verbal persuasion as hindrance toward their desistance, articulated by persuader who had knowledge of their criminal history (24 of 30)	Well-intentioned verbal persuasion as hindrance toward their desistance, articulated by persuader who was not seen by participants as an authority on the subject on which they were commenting (19 of 30)	Primary challenge of having an evaluator who was knowledgeable of their criminal history described as the activation of biases that would impact how the evaluator viewed, appraised, and interacted with them (24 of 30)	Hinderance rooted in frustration at non-expert facilitating mandated trainings (19 of 30)	Hinderance rooted in friend or family member taking multiple opportunities to offer unsolicited advice (15 of 30)	Inability to trust the judgment or evaluations given by others as a result of perception speaker's obligation, personal relationship (25 of 30)	Inability to trust the judgment or evaluations given by others as a result of perception of speaker's obligation, duties of their profession (25 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X		X	
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X		X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X		X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X		X				X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X		X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X		X	
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	
P16	Mark	33	B	X		X			X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X		X				X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X		X			X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X		X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X		X			X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B							X
P26	Theodore	40	B						X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L							
P28	Waldo	45	B							X
P29	Xavier	45	W							X
P30	Yusuf	47	W							X

Appendix Nc

Chart for Finding 4 (3 of 3

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Mandatory program cited as common setting for well-intentioned verbal persuasion as hindrance (23 of 30)	Non-Mandatory programming in which persuaders chose to interact with the participant by focusing on their past cited as common setting for well-intentioned verbal persuasion as hindrance (21 of 30)	Impacted by verbal persuasion intended toward criminal activity (post desistance process) (2 of 30)	Unaffected by the attempts of verbal persuasion toward criminality (post-desistance) as result of no longer seeing persuaders as having expertise or insight (28 of 30)	No longer exhibited a vulnerability toward appeals made to capitalize on their feeling of shame, fear, or guilt that persuaders had previously used to motivate them toward criminal action as a result of their dismissal of the persuaders as relevant (30 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X			X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X		X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X		X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X		X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X		X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X		X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X		X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X		X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X		X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X		X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X		X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X		X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X		X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X		X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X		X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X		X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X		X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X		X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X		X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X		X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X		X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X		X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X			X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X		X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B				X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B				X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L				X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B				X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W				X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W				X	X

Appendix Oa

Chart for Finding 5 (1 of 2)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Each of the participants viewed their desistance as separate from occurrences in which they may have appeared to be desistant under custody (30 of 30)	Described difference between discontinuance of, or temporary cessation from, criminality as separate from desistance (30 of 30)	Temporarily seceded from criminal activity to avoid being seen as challenging the authority or profitability of others involved in criminal practices (Dayroom), in incarceration (21 of 30)	Temporarily discontinued criminal behavior to give the appearance of having been rehabilitated and performed (presented) specific behaviors (while incarcerated) to gain the favor of individuals in authority (30 of 30)	Stated that instances of temporary cessation or discontinuance of criminal behavior were not connected to desistance (30 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X		X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X		X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X		X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X		X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X		X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X		X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X		X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X		X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X		X	X

Appendix Ob

Chart for Finding 5 (2 of 2)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Inability to engage in thinking that results in desistance due to lack of mental space within incarcerated settings (30 of 30) .	Inability to engage in thinking that results in resistance due to lack of mental space exacerbated by programs made mandatory as a stipulation of release (27 of 30)	A need to address immediate and ongoing threats that extended into release, prevented access to cognitive space and mental resources needed to engage in the reflective learning toward desistance (30 of 30)	Description of policy as preventing individuals from engaging in desistance while incentivizing a presentation of self as reformed (30 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X		X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X		X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X		X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X	X	X

Appendix Pa

Chart for Finding 6 (1 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Desistance required a reconsideration of early, repeated, and internalized experiences that led to the adoption of limiting self-beliefs and a view of incarceration as inevitable or deserved. (23 of 30)	Described having to contend with feelings of powerlessness that they attributed as having begun as consequences of early, repeated, and internalized experiences that they had in youth and adolescence (23 of 30)	Conscious addressing of emotion and perspectives from defining childhood and adolescent experiences, as necessary to combat attempts by persuasion toward reentry into criminal activity (23 of 30)	Negative formative experience with an authority in a school setting (16 of 30)	Negative formative experience with law enforcement (16 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X		X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X		X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X		X
P9	Elijah	28	W					
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X		X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X		X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	
P16	Mark	33	B					
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W					
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X		X
P24	Samuel	39	W					
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X		X
P27	Victor	40	H/L					
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W					
P30	Yusuf	47	W					

Appendix Pb

Chart for Finding 6 (2 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Families provided participants with counter-narratives, this did little to mitigate school personnel and officers recognized institutional authority (8 of 30)	Recognized school and law enforcement representatives as having absolute authority by virtue of their positions from a young age (30 of 30)	Recognized school and law enforcement representatives as being trustworthy and having absolute authority as result of societal narratives (30 of 30)	Publicly criminalized through unfounded arrests that schools initiated (18 of 30)	Felt that at least one of their arrests occurred as retaliation for attempting to assert their right to an equitable education (11 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B		X	X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B		X	X		
P3	Caleb	26	H/L		X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	
P5	Caesar	27	B		X	X		
P6	Christopher	28	H/L		X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L		X	X		
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X		
P9	Elijah	28	W		X	X		
P10	Frederick	29	H/L		X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L		X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B		X	X		
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X		
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X	X	X	
P17	Michael	36	H/L		X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	
P19	Noah	37	W		X	X		
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B		X	X	X	
P22	Quincy	39	H/L		X	X	X	
P23	Roland	39	H/L		X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W		X	X		
P25	Solomon	40	B		X	X	X	
P26	Theodore	40	B		X	X		
P27	Victor	40	H/L		X	X	X	
P28	Waldo	45	B		X	X	X	
P29	Xavier	45	W		X	X		
P30	Yusuf	47	W		X	X		

Appendix Pc

Chart for Finding 6 (3 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Recognized authority figures as being enforcers of societal limitations (25 of 30)	Drawing of a connection between discriminatory treatment, inequity of resource and access, and their burgeoning cognizance of systemic prejudice resulted in seeing subjection as ineluctable (25 of 30)	Harm made exponential by having negative identities communicated to them in front of their peers (22 of 30)	Harm made exponential by cognizance that their desired objectives only seemed within the reach of their non-discriminated peers' (25 of 30)	Environmental and social reinforcement of negative or limiting self-concept generated in early interactions and experiences (25 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X		X	
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W					
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X		X	
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W					
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	
P24	Samuel	39	W					
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X		X	
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W					
P30	Yusuf	47	W					

Appendix Pd

Chart for Finding 6 (4 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Saw their individual experiences with authorities as having been defining moments in their conceptual trajectory toward violence, criminality, and the upholding of limiting self-concepts (25 of 30)	Conditions and experiences witnessed as happening to similarly positioned peers furthered limiting self-concepts (21 of 30)	Described the verbal persuasion and vicarious influence of aspirational models, who were able to survive despite their being limited by the same systemic boundaries, as informing their approach to filling unmet essential needs (25 of 30)	Unable to cite examples of significant influences or events that provided perspectives to challenge the immutability of their conditions or the limited number of roles and identities they saw as being available to them (25 of 30)	Unable to recall instances in their youth in which they felt served or cared for by institutions (25 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X		X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W					
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X		X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W					
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X		X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W					
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X		X	X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W					
P30	Yusuf	47	W					

Appendix Pe

Chart for Finding 6 (5 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Described current cognizance of the pervasiveness of oppression in response to question about positive influences/events that challenged immutability of limiting conditions or recollection of being served well served by institutions during youth (16 of 30)	Offered what they currently hold as evidence that their current distrust of institutions is well warranted in response to question about positive influences/events that challenged immutability of limiting conditions or recollection of being served well served by institutions during youth (11 of 30)	Perceptions of inadequacy, inefficacy, and powerlessness as resulting from negative and limiting formative experiences and requiring conscious addressing to remain desistant (23 of 30)	Re-engagement of formative experiences, serving as a means of identifying the origins of long held beliefs and perspectives (23 of 30)	Returning to memories of their experience in order to reappraise events (17 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B		X	X	X	
P2	Brian	26	B		X	X	X	
P3	Caleb	26	H/L			X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X		X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	
P6	Christopher	28	H/L			X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X		X	X	X
P8	David	28	B			X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W					
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X		X	X	
P12	Henry	33	H/L		X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X		X	X	
P14	James	33	B			X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X		X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B					
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W					
P20	Oscar	38	H/L			X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X		X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	
P24	Samuel	39	W					
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X		X	X	
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X			
P28	Waldo	45	B	X		X	X	
P29	Xavier	45	W					
P30	Yusuf	47	W					

Appendix Pf

Chart for Finding 6 (6 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Perceived formative experiences as being causality for their perspectives and propensity toward criminal action and violence (23 of 30)	Consciously avoided engaging with memories of their formative experiences (20 of 30)	Came to view phase two as inefficient (23 of 30)	Sought a means of editing perspectives more efficiently than what occurred through the phase 2 approach (23 of 30)	Participants identified patterns of origin in newly incongruent behaviors and perspectives that led their seeing connection between their proclivities toward criminality and violence and narratives of subjugation and limiting beliefs they had accepted during their youth and adolescence (23 of 30).
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X		X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X		X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W					
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B					
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X		X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W					
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W					
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L					
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W					
P30	Yusuf	47	W					

Appendix Pg

Chart for Finding 6 (7 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Generative experiences resulted in the formation of underlying assumptions that they used to interpret and make sense of the world (23 of 30)	Described how implicit and explicit curricula worked to reify harmful narratives that they may have otherwise addressed sooner (23 of 30)	Negative experiences during youth and adolescence experiences resulted in their having limited self-concepts (23 of 30)	Reconsideration of formative memories led to awareness of the systemic operation of oppression (23 of 30)	Awareness of systemic oppression led to participants understanding how the authorities they encountered in their youth operated as actors or agents of institutions that exist as branches of systemic and institutional oppression (23 of 30)	Awareness of the systemic operation of oppression led to participants combating the conditions of their experience more effectively (23 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W						
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B						
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W						
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W						
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L						
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W						
P30	Yusuf	47	W						

Appendix Ph

Chart for Finding 6 (8 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Described the imposition of influences that led to their limiting self-concepts as occurring in youth, before they had had an opportunity to develop self-efficacy (25 of 30)	Youth Observations of the failure of aspirational models' and peers to overcome shared challenges and limitations reified beliefs in the futility of subversive action (25 of 30)	Reconsideration of formative memories led to a feeling of emancipation from internalized constraints (23 of 30)	Began to see conditions created by oppressive systems as alterable due to their requiring willing subjugation of a participant (23 of 30)	Reevaluation of formative experiences, and considerations of impact, led to subsequent considerations of how those experiences informed the thinking of others around them (19 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W					
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B	X	X			
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W					
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W					
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X			
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W					
P30	Yusuf	47	W					

Appendix Pi

Chart for Finding 6 (9 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Cognizance of the impact that their formative experience may have had on white peers led to revision of beliefs about the immutability of social and institutional oppression (19 of 30)	Recognition of the mechanisms by which prejudice and oppression operate as learned behaviors led to a reduction in hostility toward those they saw as taking part in or benefitting from their oppression (16 of 30)	Recognition of the mechanisms by which prejudice and oppression operate as learned behaviors led to a reduction in targeted violence (10 of 30)	Recognition of a parallel curriculum that informed those who participate as actors in participants' oppression led to participants seeing some of the actors as victims (11 of 30).	Understanding that oppression and prejudices result from learned and acculturated behaviors, and an understanding that their subjugation to oppressive systems is socially constructed, resulted in oppressive systems appearing less formidable (22 of 30)	Described criminal action as an attempt to meet the need for essential resources (30 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B					X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X		X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X				X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B					X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L					X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X		X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W						X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X		X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X		X		X	X
P13	Israel	33	B						X
P14	James	33	B	X	X			X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X		X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B						X
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X			X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W						X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X		X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X		X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X				X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W						X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X			X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X		X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L						X
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X		X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W						X
P30	Yusuf	47	W						X

Appendix Pj

Chart for Finding 6 (10 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Described criminal violence as an attempt to combat oppressive systems by attacking its representatives and actors (19 of 30)	Described criminal violence as an attempt at subverting the feeling of powerlessness by having physical and psychological power over another individual (13 of 30)	Described criminal violence as an attempt to meet essential resources (28 of 30)	Described criminal violence as a means of securing safety or protection (30 of 30)	Engagement in the mining of formative experiences resulted in participants seeing physical violence as an ineffective and unacceptable means of combating systems, subverting powerlessness, or meeting basic needs (23 of 30).	Revision of assumptions about the effectiveness and necessity of criminal violence provided as evidence of the need and benefit of re-engaging their formative experiences (23 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B		X	X	X	X	X
P2	Brian	26	B		X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L		X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X		X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X		X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X		X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B		X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X		X		
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X		X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I			X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X		X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B	X		X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B			X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X		X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B			X	X		
P17	Michael	36	H/L			X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X		X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W	X		X	X		
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X		X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L			X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X	X		
P25	Solomon	40	B		X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X		X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L		X	X	X		
P28	Waldo	45	B	X		X	X	X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X	X		
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X		X		

Appendix Pk

Chart for Finding 6 (11 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Re-engagement of formative experiences led to perception of self as a victim of violence and recalibration toward combating systems rather than seeking retribution or gain through the targeting of individuals (17 of 30)	Re-engagement of formative experiences led to perception of self as a victim of violence and recalibration toward opting out of systems rather than seeking retribution or gain through the targeting of individuals (9 of 30)	Reporting that recruiters often use an individual's unresolved feelings of pain and victimization as a means of recruiting them toward criminality (18 of 30)	Reporting that would-be persuaders often sought to present individual targets as the reason for participants' suffering and an attack on these individuals as being a solution to long-standing conditions of inequity and abuse (15 of 30)	Described recalibrations as thwarting attempts to persuade them back toward criminality (23 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B		X	X		X
P2	Brian	26	B		X	X		X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L		X	X		X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X		X		X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X		X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X		X		X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X		X	X	X
P8	David	28	B		X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W					
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X		X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I		X	X		X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X		X		X
P13	Israel	33	B	X		X	X	X
P14	James	33	B			X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X		X		X
P16	Mark	33	B					
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X		X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W					
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X			X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B	X		X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X			X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X		X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W					
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X		X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X		X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L					
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X		X	X
P29	Xavier	45	W					
P30	Yusuf	47	W					

Appendix Pl

Chart for Finding 6 (12 of 12)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Described engagement in the process of consciously addressing the emotion and perspectives from defining childhood and adolescent experiences, as a necessary step toward combating attempts by others to persuade them reentry into criminal activity (23 of 30)	Described reflective re-engagement of formative experiences as having led to a more profound understanding of underlying assumptions and how these assumptions inform their habitual actions and perspectives (23 of 30)	Described reflective re-engagement of formative experiences as having altered how their formative experiences impact them (23 of 30)	Identification of feelings of shame, fear, or anger they had carried as a result of experiences in which they were framed as relationally limited, inadequate, or powerless, during youth or adolescence (25 of 30)	Participants described engagement of formative experiences as having led to their awareness of the need to engage in reflection about their somatic responses (15 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X	X	
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X	X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X	X	
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X	
P9	Elijah	28	W					
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X	X	X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X	X	X	
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X	X
P16	Mark	33	B				X	
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X	X	X	X	
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W					
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X	X	X	X	
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X	X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W					
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X	X	X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L				X	
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X	X	X	
P29	Xavier	45	W					
P30	Yusuf	47	W					

Appendix Qa

Chart for Finding 7 (1 of 2)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Formative youth and adolescent experiences played a significant role in participants' arrival at adult criminality (30 of 30)	Described their limiting and harmful self-concepts as having been generated during adulthood (5 of 30)	Led to believe they had natural talents and abilities that would be profitable and afford a wide array of choices and options that would serve them through adulthood, during youth and adolescence (5 of 30)	Belief in entitlement to more resources or opportunity than others based on race/ethnicity or citizenship (5 of 30)	Belief in entitlement to more resources or opportunities than others based on their race, ethnicity, or citizenship tied to religious concepts (5 of 30)	Description of being explicitly taught that they had racial superiority, during youth and adolescence (4 of 30)	Youth observation of the success of aspirational models and those whom they viewed as their peer group as being evidence of their impending success (5 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X						
P2	Brian	26	B	X						
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X						
P4	Cassius	26	B	X						
P5	Caesar	27	B	X						
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X						
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X						
P8	David	28	B	X						
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X						
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X						
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X						
P13	Israel	33	B	X						
P14	James	33	B	X						
P15	Louis	33	B	X						
P16	Mark	33	B	X						
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X						
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X						
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X						
P21	Phillip	38	B	X						
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X						
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X						
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X	X	X	X		X
P25	Solomon	40	B	X						
P26	Theodore	40	B	X						
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X						
P28	Waldo	45	B	X						
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Appendix Qb

Chart for Finding 7 (2 of 2)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Acculturated into a belief in the guaranteed success and racial superiority, participants arrived at adulthood with high-levels of efficacy as a result of direct and vicarious success and an expectation that they would be entitled to more than their non-white peers (5 of 30)	Participants encountered information during the early portions of their adulthood that led to a lowering of efficacy and a questioning of self-concepts (5 of 30)	Disorientation as the result of seeing individuals whom they viewed as inferior to themselves progress beyond them in education (2 of 30)	Disorientation as the result of seeing individuals whom they viewed as inferior to themselves progress beyond them in financial achievement (5 of 30)	Criminal intention and violence that differentiated youthful missteps and engagement in criminality came as a result of disorientation and loss of efficacy experienced in the transition to adulthood (5 of 30)	Experienced a cascading adoption of limiting self-beliefs that caused them to see a reduced number of options as viable and success at endeavors outside of criminality as unlikely (5 of 30)	Feelings of shame, fear, and anger as a result of self-perceived limitations, during adulthood (5 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B							
P2	Brian	26	B							
P3	Caleb	26	H/L							
P4	Cassius	26	B							
P5	Caesar	27	B							
P6	Christopher	28	H/L							
P7	Daniel	28	H/L							
P8	David	28	B							
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L							
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I							
P12	Henry	33	H/L							
P13	Israel	33	B							
P14	James	33	B							
P15	Louis	33	B							
P16	Mark	33	B							
P17	Michael	36	H/L							
P18	Nathaniel	36	B							
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L							
P21	Phillip	38	B							
P22	Quincy	39	H/L							
P23	Roland	39	H/L							
P24	Samuel	39	W	X	X		X	X	X	X
P25	Solomon	40	B							
P26	Theodore	40	B							
P27	Victor	40	H/L							
P28	Waldo	45	B							
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X		X	X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X		X	X	X	X

Appendix Ra

Chart for Finding 8 (1 of 3)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Somatic response triggered by the presence an identifiable group (non-racial/non-ethnic/non-law enforcement) with perceived likeness to alleged assailants presented as having harmed or murdered individuals that participants saw as being similar to themselves (4 of 30)	Somatic response triggered by the presence of a group of a particular race or ethnicity as group (but not an individual) with perceived likeness to assailants alleged to have harmed individuals that participants saw as being similar to themselves (25 of 30)	Somatic response triggered by the presence of an individual of specific race or ethnicity with perceived likeness to assailants presented as having harmed or killed individuals that participants saw as similar to themselves (5 of 30)	Somatic response triggered by presence of law enforcement as a result what was presentations of information (through word of mouth or media), in which individuals that participants viewed as similar to themselves were killed by police (25 of 30)	Commonly experienced somatic responses at seeing similarity in an individual's race or ethnicity to assailants in stories they'd heard or images they'd seen in movies or television (5 of 30).	Described somatic triggers as resulting in their physical bodies preparing to engage in violence (24 of 30)	Despite engagement in other steps, described themselves as still having needed to engage in intentional suppression or disregarding of bodily responses to engage in thinking and reasoning during moments of high stress (28 of 30)	Described themselves as having engaged in imagined experiences in which they found themselves in situations of being triggered by the aforementioned stressors as a means of preparing too suppress or disregarded the somatic responses (24 of 30)	Rehearsed or coached themselves to engage in box breathing as means of suppressing or disregarding physiological responses (3 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B		X		X		X			
P2	Brian	26	B		X		X		X	X	X	
P3	Caleb	26	H/L		X		X		X	X	X	
P4	Cassius	26	B		X		X		X	X	X	
P5	Caesar	27	B		X		X		X	X	X	
P6	Christopher	28	H/L		X		X		X	X	X	
P7	Daniel	28	H/L		X		X		X	X	X	
P8	David	28	B		X		X		X	X	X	
P9	Elijah	28	W			X		X	X	X	X	
P10	Frederick	29	H/L		X		X		X	X	X	
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I		X		X		X	X	X	
P12	Henry	33	H/L		X		X		X	X	X	
P13	Israel	33	B		X		X		X	X	X	
P14	James	33	B		X		X		X	X	X	
P15	Louis	33	B		X		X		X	X	X	
P16	Mark	33	B		X		X		X	X	X	
P17	Michael	36	H/L		X		X		X	X	X	
P18	Nathaniel	36	B		X		X		X	X	X	
P19	Noah	37	W			X		X	X	X	X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L		X		X		X	X	X	
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X		X		X	X	X	
P22	Quincy	39	H/L		X		X		X	X	X	
P23	Roland	39	H/L		X		X		X	X	X	
P24	Samuel	39	W			X		X	X	X		
P25	Solomon	40	B	X	X		X			X		
P26	Theodore	40	B	X	X		X			X		X
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X	X		X			X		
P28	Waldo	45	B		X		X					
P29	Xavier	45	W			X		X		X	X	
P30	Yusuf	47	W			X		X		X	X	X

Appendix Rb

Chart for Finding 8 (2 of 3)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Rehearsed or coached themselves to engage in purposeful hesitation or stillness as means of suppressing or disregarding physiological responses (2 of 30)	Rehearsed or coached themselves to engage in positive self-talk as means of suppressing or disregarding physiological responses (22 of 30)	Planned for the recollection of action plans during their imagined experiences in hopes of drawing upon the same strategies during moments of threat or high stress (15 of 30)	Ability to reallocate cognitive resources as requiring preemptive engagement in the cognitive experiencing or imagining of scenarios likely to trigger somatic responses (20 of 30)	Used imagined scenarios as being a means of gaining comfort in discomfort, external stimuli (16 of 30)	Used imagined scenarios as being a means of creating scenarios they could draw on as a means of accounting for unencountered variables that emerged as possibilities, external stimuli (15 of 30)	Increased exposure to groups or individuals whom perceived as threat did not impact ability to better manage somatic responses or result in groups or individuals being seen as less of a threat (30 of 30)	Participants credited their management of somatic responses as being connected to the efficacy gained through experiences of non-desistance related success (21 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B							X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X		X	X		X	
P3	Caleb	26	H/L		X	X	X	X		X	
P4	Cassius	26	B		X		X	X		X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L		X	X	X	X		X	
P7	Daniel	28	H/L		X		X	X		X	X
P8	David	28	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L		X		X	X		X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I		X	X			X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B		X		X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	
P16	Mark	33	B		X		X	X	X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L		X	X	X		X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W		X		X			X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L		X					X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B		X					X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L		X	X		X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W							X	
P25	Solomon	40	B							X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B							X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L							X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B							X	
P29	Xavier	45	W			X	X		X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W			X	X		X	X	

Appendix Rc

Chart for Finding 8 (3 of 3)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Rehearsed or coached themselves to engage in purposeful hesitation or stillness as means of suppressing or disregarding physiological responses (2 of 30)	Rehearsed or coached themselves to engage in positive self-talk as means of suppressing or disregarding physiological responses (22 of 30)	Planned for the recollection of action plans during their imagined experiences in hopes of drawing upon the same strategies during moments of threat or high stress (15 of 30)	Ability to reallocate cognitive resources as requiring preemptive engagement in the cognitive experiencing or imagining of scenarios likely to trigger somatic responses (20 of 30)	Used imagined scenarios as being a means of gaining comfort in discomfort, external stimuli (16 of 30)	Used imagined scenarios as being a means of creating scenarios they could draw on as a means of accounting for unencountered variables that emerged as possibilities, external stimuli (15 of 30)	Increased exposure to groups or individuals whom perceived as threat did not impact ability to better manage somatic responses or result in groups or individuals being seen as less of a threat (30 of 30)	Participants credited their management of somatic responses as being connected to the efficacy gained through experiences of non-desistance related success (21 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B							X	X
P2	Brian	26	B	X	X		X	X		X	
P3	Caleb	26	H/L		X	X	X	X		X	
P4	Cassius	26	B		X		X	X		X	X
P5	Caesar	27	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L		X	X	X	X		X	
P7	Daniel	28	H/L		X		X	X		X	X
P8	David	28	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P9	Elijah	28	W	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L		X		X	X		X	X
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I		X	X			X	X	X
P12	Henry	33	H/L		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P13	Israel	33	B		X		X	X	X	X	X
P14	James	33	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P15	Louis	33	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	
P16	Mark	33	B		X		X	X	X	X	X
P17	Michael	36	H/L		X	X	X		X	X	X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P19	Noah	37	W		X		X			X	X
P20	Oscar	38	H/L		X					X	X
P21	Phillip	38	B		X					X	X
P22	Quincy	39	H/L		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L		X	X		X	X	X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W							X	
P25	Solomon	40	B							X	X
P26	Theodore	40	B							X	X
P27	Victor	40	H/L							X	X
P28	Waldo	45	B							X	
P29	Xavier	45	W			X	X		X	X	X
P30	Yusuf	47	W			X	X		X	X	

Appendix Sa

Chart for Finding 9 (1 of 2)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	View of self as having became a new or different individual as a result of critical learning throughout the desistance process (30 of 30)	Observations and expressions offered by others, proof of being new or different (28 of 30)	Increased cognizance of, and ability to consider, future consequences and benefits, proof of being new or different (28 of 30)	Increase in concern and consideration toward others' feelings and well-being, proof of being new or different (6 of 30)	A shift or change in perceived needs, proof of being new or different (11 of 30)	Adoption of information searching practices, proof of being new or different (25 of 30)	Importance of a praxis based approach, learning to desist (28 of 30)	Model of desistance as having been of enduring or notable importance (0 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X	X					
P2	Brian	26	B	X		X		X	X	X	
P3	Caleb	26	H/L	X	X					X	
P4	Cassius	26	B	X	X	X		X		X	
P5	Caesar	27	B	X	X	X				X	
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
P7	Daniel	28	H/L	X		X	X	X	X	X	
P8	David	28	B	X		X		X		X	
P9	Elijah	28	W	X		X				X	
P10	Frederick	29	H/L	X	X	X		X		X	
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I	X				X	X	X	
P12	Henry	33	H/L	X	X		X	X		X	
P13	Israel	33	B	X		X				X	
P14	James	33	B	X	X			X	X	X	
P15	Louis	33	B	X		X	X			X	
P16	Mark	33	B	X		X				X	
P17	Michael	36	H/L	X		X		X		X	
P18	Nathaniel	36	B	X	X			X	X	X	
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X				X	
P20	Oscar	38	H/L	X				X		X	
P21	Phillip	38	B	X		X		X		X	
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X		X		X		X	
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
P24	Samuel	39	W	X			X	X	X	X	
P25	Solomon	40	B	X					X	X	
P26	Theodore	40	B	X				X	X	X	
P27	Victor	40	H/L	X		X		X	X	X	
P28	Waldo	45	B	X	X					X	
P29	Xavier	45	W	X		X				X	
P30	Yusuf	47	W	X	X						

Appendix Sb

Chart for Finding 9 (2 of 2)

Participant # (N=30)	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Race	Personal consequences of specific courses of action or responses, described as a focus of reflection (12 of 30)	Opportunity costs of specific courses of action or responses, described as a focus of reflection (18 of 30)	Benefits of specific courses of actions or responses, described as a focus of reflection (28 of 30)	Impact of specific courses of action or responses on others, described as a focus of reflection (15 or 30)	Unknown factors and ways to gather relevant information, described as a focus of reflection (19 of 30)	Perceived reflection as a natural occurrence (14 of 30)	Perceived harm or hurt act as motivator of, or catalyst toward, reflection (15 of 30)	Perceived love as catalyst toward reflection, without the compliment or impact of harm or hurt (17 of 30)
P1	Alex	25	B	X	X					X	
P2	Brian	26	B	X		X		X	X		X
P3	Caleb	26	H/L			X	X	X	X		X
P4	Cassius	26	B		X	X					X
P5	Caesar	27	B	X		X		X	X		X
P6	Christopher	28	H/L	X		X	X	X		X	X
P7	Daniel	28	H/L		X	X	X	X		X	X
P8	David	28	B	X	X	X	X			X	
P9	Elijah	28	W		X	X		X	X		X
P10	Frederick	29	H/L		X	X	X			X	
P11	Gilbert	32	O-I			X		X		X	
P12	Henry	33	H/L			X	X		X	X	
P13	Israel	33	B	X	X	X		X		X	
P14	James	33	B			X	X	X	X	X	
P15	Louis	33	B	X	X	X	X			X	
P16	Mark	33	B		X	X		X	X		X
P17	Michael	36	H/L		X	X			X		X
P18	Nathaniel	36	B			X	X	X			X
P19	Noah	37	W	X	X	X	X		X		
P20	Oscar	38	H/L			X	X	X		X	
P21	Phillip	38	B	X	X	X		X	X		
P22	Quincy	39	H/L	X	X	X	X			X	X
P23	Roland	39	H/L	X		X	X	X		X	X
P24	Samuel	39	W		X	X	X	X			X
P25	Solomon	40	B		X	X		X	X		X
P26	Theodore	40	B			X		X		X	
P27	Victor	40	H/L		X	X		X		X	
P28	Waldo	45	B		X	X			X		X
P29	Xavier	45	W	X	X	X		X	X		X
P30	Yusuf	47	W				X		X		X